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MONDAY, MAY 16, 2022

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Procure wheat till May 31, Centre tells State governments
page 9

Devasahayam is first Indian layman to be declared saint by Pope
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10 killed in shooting in Buffalo; police call it racially motivated
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Former Aussie all-rounder Andrew Symonds killed in car crash
Page 14

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NEARBY

State has second highest dengue cases after T.N.

BENGALURU

Karnataka has the second highest number of dengue cases in the country this year. While Tamil Nadu tops the list with 2,361 cases, Karnataka follows with 1,417 cases reported from January till April 30 this year.

KARNATAKA ▸ PAGE 3

Cong. ticket policy may not impact State leaders

MYSURU/KALABURAGI

Notwithstanding the initial stir created in the Congress over the party's one family, one ticket policy that came under the lens at the ongoing Chintan Shivir in Udaipur, most political families belonging to the grand old party in Karnataka are unlikely to face the axe in the coming elections.

KARNATAKA ▸ PAGE 4

EDUCATIONPLUS ▸ PAGE 5

Creating history

Phenomenal achievement: The Indian team proudly poses with the Thomas Cup, the symbol of supremacy in men's team badminton, after blanking defending champion Indonesia 3-0 in the final in Bangkok on Sunday. It was India's maiden success in the prestigious tournament. • BADMINTONPHOTO/COURTESY OF BWF (REPORT ON PAGE 11)

Congress will have a new rising, says Sonia

Udaipur Declaration calls for connect with people, reforms

SANDEEP PHUKAN
UDAIPUR

Connect with the people, agitate on the streets and usher in organisational reforms – these three broad themes figured in the Udaipur Declaration adopted by the Congress on Sunday after three days of brainstorming at the *Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir* to be battle-ready for the next round of Assembly polls and the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

Beginning with the 2024 Lok Sabha election, 50% of the party ticket would be given to people under 50 years of age in every election, be it to the Assembly or others. The Declaration also talked about fixing a retirement age for elected representatives but did not mention any cut-off age.

Expressing hope that the Congress will overcome its current state of affairs, party chief Sonia Gandhi announced a *Bharat Jodo Yatra* from Kanyakumari to Kashmir from October 2 "to strengthen the bonds of social harmony that are under stress, preserve the foundational values of our Constitution and highlight the day-to-day concerns of crores of our people".

"We will overcome. That is our determination. That is our *Nav Sankalp* [new resolve]. The Congress will have a new *uday* [rising]. That is our *Nav Sankalp*," Ms. Gandhi told the concluding session of the *chintan shivir*.

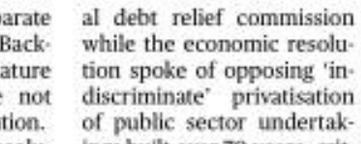
In the social justice section of the Declaration, the party reiterated its stand of quota within quota in the women's reservation Bill and support for the caste-based census but the proposal to seek reservation in private sector and separate reservation for Other Backward Classes in legislature and Parliament were not there in the final resolution.

The agriculture resolution backs minimum support price (MSP) with a legal guarantee, offering free power to farmers for irrigation and setting up a national debt relief commission while the economic resolution spoke of opposing 'indiscriminate' privatisation of public sector undertakings built over 70 years, criticised jobless growth and stressed on engaging with the new-age economy.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Chintan Shivir takeaways

In its Udaipur Declaration adopted after deliberations at the *Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir*, the Congress outlines plans for the revival of the party. Here are a few highlights:



- 'One family, one ticket' rule, with exception only for another family member working in the party for at least five years
- No person should hold one party position for more than five years
- 50% representation to those below 50 years of age at all levels of the organisation
- Party president to form an advisory group from among Congress Working Committee members to deliberate on political challenges
- Political Affairs Committee in every State
- Public insight, election management and national training departments to be set up
- Task force will be set up to initiate organisational reforms

> We will overcome. That is our determination. That is our *Nav Sankalp*. The Congress will have a new *uday*
> SONIA GANDHI CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Saha in charge, new Cabinet soon

Tripura CM vows to continue Deb's welfare schemes

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

Manik Saha, who was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Tripura on Sunday, said he shared a strong chemistry with his predecessor, Biplab Kumar Deb, and it would be his endeavour to implement all welfare decisions of the previous government.

"My Cabinet will be carrying forward all decisions and schemes of the past government headed by Biplab Kumar Deb. I share a very strong chemistry with the former Chief Minister," Dr. Saha said at his first press conference as Chief Minister.

He hinted that Mr. Deb, who resigned in a sudden political development on Saturday, would be given an important responsibility in the party.

New beginning: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha with Biplab Kumar Deb after taking oath in Agartala on Sunday. • PTI

Earlier in the day, Governor Satyadev Narayan Arya administered the oath of office to Mr. Saha at the Raj Bhavan. Mr. Deb and those who were in his Cabinet participated, but Opposition parties, including the CPI (M), boycotted the ceremony, citing the "dismal law and order situation" in the State.

No other Minister was inducted on Sunday, but Dr. Saha said the Cabinet expansion would be done in the next couple of days. He indicated that there would be minor changes in his Council of Ministers.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

EDITORIAL ▸ PAGE 6

Finland confirms bid to join NATO

REUTERS
HELSINKI

Finland will apply for NATO membership, the country's president, Sauli Niinisto, confirmed on Sunday. "Today, we, the President and the government's foreign policy committee, have decided that Finland... will apply for NATO membership," he said.

Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson will seek support to join NATO on Monday, she said as her party dropped its opposition to membership.

REPORT ON ▸ PAGE 11

Only Congress can take on the BJP, says Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
UDAIPUR

The Congress's connection with the people has broken and it needs to be re-established by standing with the people instead of focusing on internal matters, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said on Sunday.

At the concluding session of the *chintan shivir*, Mr. Gandhi said only the Congress could take on the Bharatiya Janata Party in an ideological fight and not any regional party, though such players had their space.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

It's back to school for students in State from today

Government and aided schools to welcome them with sweets, midday meals, and events

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

After 35 days of summer vacation, students in Karnataka will be heading back to classes as all schools – State and Central boards – reopen for the academic year 2022-23 on Monday.

It is going to be a festive atmosphere in many schools. As per the instructions of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), all government and aided schools are planning to welcome the students with midday meals, sweets, and even cultural events.

The schools will be decorated with flowers and rangoli. The DPI has even set up teams in each taluk to pay surprise visits to schools and examine the arrangements.

Due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, schools were closed for nearly two years. Without any physical classes, students had lost learning skills.

A classroom of the Government Kannada Model Primary School at Ganganagar in Bengaluru being readied ahead of school reopening. • SUDHAKARA JAIN

For recovery of learning skills, the DPI has been implementing 'Kalika Chetarike' (Learning recovery) programme for students of classes I to X, and 'Vidya Pravesh' for students of classes I to III for those entering the school environment for the first time. Private school managements are planning to implement bridge courses for all the students.

Primary and Secondary Education Minister B.C. Nagesh said, "We successfully conducted meetings with all the teachers, School Development and Monitoring Committee members and local elected representatives in all the districts regarding the grand opening of schools. We got a positive response from everyone. Due to the COVID-19 lockdowns, schools were closed for two years and students have lost their learning skills. To fill this learning gap, the DPI is implementing Kalika Chetarike in all the schools and has already given training to all the teachers in this regard."

On the other hand, private managements are preferring to follow COVID-19 norms and have sanitised the classrooms. Wearing mask, thermal scanning, and using sanitiser have been made compulsory for all the students and staff. .

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 3

M.P. study finds hepatitis in COVID-affected children

Unexplained condition is different from Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

While fresh COVID-19 cases in India remain at manageable levels, doctors in India, as medical experts globally, grapple with a mysterious spike in unexplained hepatitis in children who have tested positive for the infection.

A team of doctors from the Bundelkhand Medical College (BMC), Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, and the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Research, Chandigarh, report that 37 (about 8%) of 475 children who tested COVID-19 positive from April to July in 2021 developed COVID-acquired hepatitis (CAH).

Though sporadic reports from various parts of India have emerged in the past two years, this is the first systematic investigation to quantify the scale of the syndrome in the country.

Ten children had the more serious and rare, but better-documented Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), which is marked by inflammation in multiple organs and can kill three in every 10 diagnosed children.

In CAH, the symptoms include nausea, loss of appetite, weakness, and mild fever. Inflammation is not marked, though a high level of liver enzymes, called transaminases, is observed. All of the other typical causes of hepatitis, such as associated viruses, are absent. All of the 37 children recovered "uneventfully", meaning that routine treatment for severe hepatitis with corticosteroids, rehydration, fever management and vitamins was sufficient.

"We observed a peculiar rise in hepatitis cases. Usually, the beginning of monsoon marks a rise in hepatitis cases. Last year (2021), we started to see this in April, or summer, in COVID-positive children who were part of follow-up. Most of them, in fact, had recovered from their COVID," said Sumit Rawat, Associate Professor, Microbiology, BMC, and the corresponding author of the study.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

COVID-acquired hepatitis | The first systematic investigation in India to quantify the scale of the syndrome in children, a condition reported globally, was held in Madhya Pradesh

- 37 of the 475 children who tested COVID-positive from April to July in 2021 got hepatitis (CAH)
- All of the 37 children recovered 'uneventfully', meaning that routine treatment for severe hepatitis was sufficient
- Symptoms include nausea, loss of appetite, weakness, and mild fever
- The typical causes of hepatitis, such as associated viruses, are absent

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NEWS IN NUMBERS

Dip in frauds

51 The percentage by which public sector banks (PSB) reported a dip in the amount involved in frauds during the financial year ended March 2022. According to the RBI data on frauds reported by PSBs in all categories during FY22, the highest amount of ₹9,528.95 crore was reported by the Punjab National Bank (PNB), involving 431 such incidents. The country's largest lender the State Bank of India reported frauds worth ₹6,932.37 crore in as many as 4,192 cases — reflecting incidents of a large number of small value frauds. PTI

Workforce expansion

8.8 In million, the number of people who joined the country's workforce in April, as per data provided by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). India's labour force increased by 8.8 million to 437.2 million in April, one of the largest monthly increases since the beginning of the pandemic. The increase in employment in April was in industry and services. Industry added 5.5 million jobs and services added another 6.7 million jobs, as per the data. Employment in the agricultural sector fell by 5.2 million. PTI

Raking profits

80 The percentage by which oil giant Saudi Aramco's profits soared in the first three months of the year, as the company cashed in on the volatility in global energy markets and rising oil prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The first-quarter earnings by the firm formally known as the Saudi Arabian Oil Co show a record net income of $39.5 billion, up from $21.7 billion during the same period last year. The figure marks the oil group's highest quarterly profit since 2019. Shares of Aramco were up 1.85% following the earnings report. PTI

Milestone win

1,000 The number of wins earned by world number one Novak Djokovic by beating Casper Ruud 6-4 6-3 on Saturday to reach the Italian Open final. The 34 year-old is only the fifth man in the Open Era to reach the 1,000 wins milestone after Jimmy Connors, Roger Federer, Ivan Lendl, and Rafael Nadal. Djokovic will face Stefanos Tsitsipas in the title clash. Djokovic has already secured a record-extending 370th week as world number one thanks to his straight sets victory. REUTERS

On a high

84 The number of people working at 42 Indian airports who were found drunk on duty between January 2021 and March 2022, as per the data of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). 54 of the 84 workers who failed the mandatory alcohol tests were drivers. While many of the workers who failed the alcohol tests were employed by airport operators, a significant section of them were employed by other companies — catering companies, aircraft maintenance companies, etc — which work at the airport. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

Finland's bid to join NATO

What does Finland's entry into NATO mean for Russia and the European Union? Will the move escalate the security crisis?

THE GIST

- The strategic geopolitical ambiguity of Finland has finally come to a halt and taken a hard turn as Finland formally announced its intention of joining NATO.
- The Russian Defense Committee deputy chair, Aleksey Zhuravlyov, discussed Russia nuking Europe and also questioned the very existence of Finland on Russian state television. This bears similarities to their justification for the Ukrainian invasion.
- As Kremlin's rhetoric and threats against its neighbours continue to increase, it wouldn't be a flight of fancy to imagine that more of its neighbours, primarily the Baltic states, will firmly express their heightened security concerns and seek to remedy them.

RISHABH KACHROO

"The Lord's our shepherd", says the Psalm
But just in case, we better get a bomb!'
*-*Tom Lehrer, *Who's next?*

The story so far: The strategic geopolitical ambiguity of Finland has finally come to a halt and taken a hard turn as Finland formally announced its intention of joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This marks the culmination of a series of veiled comments by Finland hinting their intention of joining NATO. The Finnish President Sauli Niinistö along with the Ministerial Committee on Foreign and Security Policy announced their bid for NATO membership on Sunday. They would now send their recommendation to the Parliament where it is expected to pass through without any roadblocks.

The last two odd decades have seen Finland revise its outlook of global geopolitics and order but rarely have their different heads of state overtly signalled their shift. This ambiguity has allowed them to not only improve their ties with rest of the Europe post 2000 but also go back to increasing trade ties with Russia during the European economic slump. Their actions post the collapse of the Soviet Union and emergence of a more integrated European Union indicate their preference for having their cake and eating it too. This is set to change and has been brought about by Russia's actions in Ukraine. The Finnish security concerns began to heighten post the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and have snow-balled now into an immediate existential crisis of sorts after the recent Russian assault on Ukraine.

What is happening?

The last joint statement by the Finnish President and Prime Minister Sanna Marin put it in no ambiguous terms that "Finland must apply for NATO membership without delay". This was followed by the official Finnish declaration of a NATO bid on Sunday. This tectonic shift is likely to have significant ramifications for the entire European continent. The last few days also saw Russian Defence Committee deputy chair, Aleksey Zhuravlyov, discuss Russia nuking Europe and question the very existence of Finland on Russian state television which bears similarities to their justification for the Ukrainian invasion. Mr. Zhuravlyov also threated the Finns with the use of Kinzhal-class ballistic missiles boasting how it "will reach Finland in 20 seconds, or even 10 seconds". RAO Nordic (a subsidiary of Inter RAO which is a major energy company in Russia), citing delayed payments from Finland, cut off electricity supply to Finland. The Finns seem to be hopeful that Sweden, the Baltic nations, and their own energy sources can help fill the void. There also seems to be a concerted effort from sections of the western media to create a sense of panic in Finland which has been decried by Finnish nationals. Mr. Niinistö spoke with the U.S. President Joe Biden and the Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson discussing their "next steps towards NATO membership".

How has Russia responded to the announcement?

Official voices from within Russia give a sense of how they perceive the U.S's role as an agent provocateur trying to lure other countries towards NATO. The Russian state seems to be going through a sense of mania where officials talk about nuking countries, 'crushing bugs' (referring to the Baltic states), and invading countries in a bid to safeguard their security. Finland's formal declaration and Sweden's interest in joining NATO has aggravated their security dilemma. We see the manifestation of Waltzian realism unravelling in front of us as nations begin to grapple with their existential crises precipitated by the anarchic structure of the world and actions of other states aimed towards their security goals.

These states seek security guarantees through alliance formation as well. The risk of a new arms race cannot be entirely written off as we see strongman tactics from the Russian head of state and from different senior security officials of the Russian government which signal revanchist attitudes and a highly volatile method of engagement.

What does NATO membership achieve?

One would expect NATO membership to allay Finland and Sweden's security concerns to a reasonable degree as all the countries involved in the highly volatile region would, likely, reach an impasse until someone decides to break through the gridlock through a change in tactics.

However, the rational actor assumption has recently been on tumultuous grounds vis-à-vis Russia, and it would be difficult to predict its next set of actions as and when Finland and Sweden formally join NATO. Even the comments of a former Prime Minister of Denmark, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, on the NATO membership teaching Russian President Vladimir Putin the resolve of the West and the counterproductive nature of the war, are based on Mr. Putin following the supposed logic of a rational actor.

What lies ahead?

As Kremlin's rhetoric and threats against its neighbours continue to increase, it wouldn't be a flight of fancy to imagine that more of its neighbours, primarily the Baltic states, will firmly express their heightened security concerns and seek to remedy them. Those actions would then in turn further create a high security risk environment in the immediate periphery of Russia. NATO expansionism has been publicly cited multiple times by Russian Ministers and senior defence officers as a major reason for Russia's perceived security threat. Estonia has already asked NATO for local anti-Russia command centres and greater air defence systems citing Baltic security concerns.

The full-blown Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began almost three months back, has only resulted in isolating Russia from most countries in the world. They are losing a significant number of troops and scores of military equipment as the war continues. What seemed initially like a quick victory to the Russians is now spiralling into a nightmare for Kremlin. The propaganda can only cloak the reality for so long. The war is also taking an economic toll on Moscow as it is further impacted by the economic sanctions against them by the West. As multiple corporations leave the Russian space and countries continue to decrease their energy dependency on Russia, the road ahead for Moscow is most certainly a dark and long-winding one. As Finland joins NATO, Russia could seek to deploy more troops along the Russian-Finland border and further thin-out an already attenuated Russian army.

Finland and Russia share a 1,300 km border and Kremlin's actions against Finland's (and potentially Sweden's) NATO membership may heavily depend on the potential military asset deployment along the border on the Finnish, and potentially Swedish, side. The Finns may very well not opt for immediate asset deployment and perhaps would want to use their NATO membership as a signal to Russia but if they continue to feel sufficiently threatened, they may opt for exhaustive asset deployment. Russia's revanchist assault on Ukrainian sovereignty has cascaded into a nightmare for Russian security concerns, with NATO looking to be at their immediate doorsteps. Such actions would only further fuel already anxious and retaliatory minds within Russia and may cause things to spiral out of control. Constant communication from all sides is key to avoid a grim eventuality. The Finns understand this and have constantly been in touch with Kremlin updating them of developments. Sunday's announcement saw the Finnish President reiterate that they don't see security as a zero-sum game (a comment aimed to quell anxious minds within Kremlin). The situation is also exacerbated by the political capital Mr. Putin continues to enjoy which makes it even more difficult for any significant political opposition to come to the fore. The only hope from within the Russian borders would be the collective conscience of the Russian public.

Rishabh Kachroo is a Ph.D scholar at the department of International Relations and Governance Studies at Shiv Nadar University

Choosing sides: Finland's Prime Minister Sanna Marin and Finland's President Sauli Niinistö give a press conference to announce that Finland will apply for NATO membership at the Presidential Palace in Helsinki, Finland on May 15. • AFP

EXPLAINER

Understanding Long COVID and its effects

What are the main symptoms associated with Long COVID? Have many cases been detected in India?

RAMYA KANNAN

The story so far: Months after the first cases of COVID-19 were detected in the world outside China, concerns about persistent symptoms post infection cropped up. Systems were then set up to study this phenomenon and provide possible solutions to those suffering from sequalae related to their COVID infection. *The Lancet's* May 11 publication has provided more grist to the mill for those calling for greater attention to Long COVID, establishing that the burden of symptomatic sequelae remained fairly high even two years after COVID. Pandemic survivors also had a remarkably lower health status than the general population at two years, it said.

What is long COVID?

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, evidence showed that a considerable proportion of people who have recovered from COVID-19 continue to face long-term effects on multiple organs and systems. These sequelae have also been noticed in people who did not exhibit any symptoms during their infection stage. In the absence of a universally-accepted definition, post-COVID Syndrome, by consensus, is defined as signs and

symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19 which continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by alternative diagnosis. Technically, post-COVID defines symptoms that persist four weeks after infection and Long COVID, 12 weeks past a COVID-19 infection.

The effects range from skin rash, sleep difficulties, fatigue or muscle weakness, hair loss, joint pain, palpitations, dizziness, cough, headache, sore throat, chest pain, smell and taste disorders, anxiety disorders and mobility issues.

How long does long COVID last for?

The study, perhaps for the first time, described Long COVID for the longest time possible – two years. It characterises the longitudinal evolution of health outcomes in hospital survivors with different initial disease severity throughout the two years after an acute COVID-19 infection. A matched control group of adults without a COVID-19 infection were studied against patients who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, and had been discharged from Jin Yin-tan Hospital in Wuhan, China, between January 7 and May 29, 2020. Health outcomes were measured at six months, 12 months and two years after symptom onset.

The study did note that the proportion of individuals with at least one sequelae symptom decreased significantly from 68% at six months to 55% at two years, (with fatigue or muscle weakness being the most frequently reported symptom throughout follow-up). The scene continued to improve in almost all domains, especially in terms of anxiety or depression, with the proportion of participants reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression dropping significantly from 23% at six months to 12% at two years. About 89 % of those who had been hospitalised for COVID had returned to their regular work at the end of two years. At the two-year follow-up, notably, long COVID symptoms were related to a decreased health-related quality of life and exercise capacity, psychological abnormality, and increased use of health care after discharge.

COVID-19 survivors still had more prevalent symptoms and more problems with pain or discomfort, as well as anxiety or depression, at two years, than did the control group, as per the study. Additionally, a significantly higher proportion of survivors who had received higher-level respiratory support during hospitalisation continued to have lung issues. The study findings indicate that there was an urgent need to explore the pathogenesis of Long COVID and develop effective interventions to reduce the risk of such side effects.

What is the status in India?

The government of India developed its own National Comprehensive Guidelines for the management of post-COVID sequelae. This document sets out detailed techniques to treat post-COVID complications affecting cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, nephrological, neurological and respiratory systems. Several hospitals set up COVID wards to treat persons who complain of what seemed like post-COVID symptoms.

In January 2022, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi, reported that people infected in the second wave of COVID have experienced four times more Long COVID conditions than those from the first wave. According to doctors at the hospital, people who contracted the virus in the second wave showed multiple symptoms including high grade fever, diarrhoea and severe lung infection. They added that even after a year of testing positive, the road to recovery for patients had been very difficult, with acute weakness and fatigue plaguing their everyday lives.

Chandrakanth Lahariya, epidemiologist and public policy and health systems specialist, said it appeared that both Post COVID and Long COVID had fewer numbers in India. "We need to remember," he hastened to explain to this correspondent, "Post COVID and Long COVID are realities. A small proportion of people will continue to have symptoms, beyond four weeks, and beyond 12 weeks." The broader principles of immunology – how the immune system works, how vaccination helps – are universal principles –they worked the same way, largely, in any part of the world, Dr. Lahariya explained. This was not the same for Long COVID, because these were health conditions, and these need not necessarily be the same across the world.

THE GIST

- In the absence of a universally-accepted definition, post-COVID Syndrome, by consensus, is defined as signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19 which continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by alternative diagnosis.
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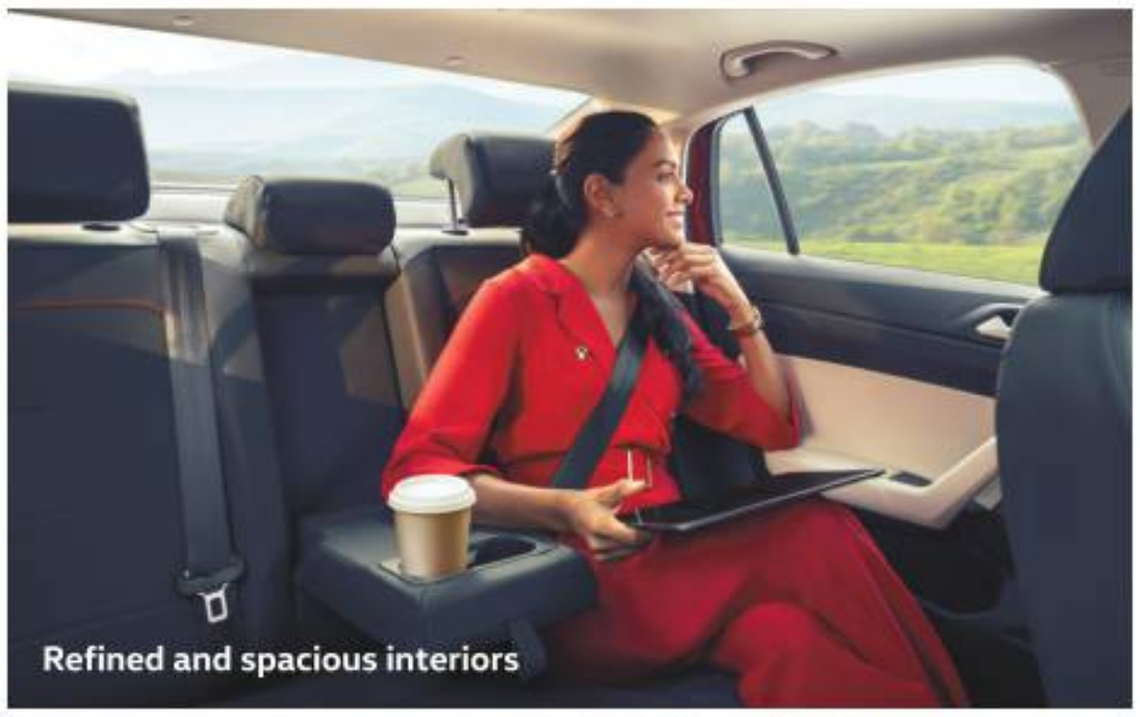

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Cycling gains favour in city, but concerns remain

'As the demand for cycling is increasing, infrastructure for cyclists should be put in place accordingly'

TANIA ANNY
BENGALURU

According to Bengaluru's Bicycle Mayor Sathya Sankaran, the number of both cyclists and cycling groups in the city has increased. •BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

Be it for physical fitness or general commuting, the pandemic has put the pedal to the metal for cycling in the city. Hesitance to use public transport such as buses and taxis in the last two years also contributed to people shifting to cycling.

Bengaluru's Bicycle Mayor Sathya Sankaran said the number of both cyclists and cycling groups had increased in the city. "Apart from professional cyclists, many people have started using cycles for daily commute. One of the main reasons is that after the pandemic outbreak, gyms were closed for so long. To be fit and for fresh air, cycling became a natural choice, as roads were also traffic-free," he said.

Due to increased demand and disruptions in supply of branded cycles, people had to wait for months to buy a bicycle.

Tanmai Jain, a cyclist and trainer, said, "When the pandemic was at its peak, people were confined to their homes. There were restrictions on the movement of people to contain the spread of the virus. As the lockdown restrictions were eased, many health-conscious people started using cycles. It was the best available option to exercise in their neighbourhood."

Though it is a good sign that more people are shifting to an environmentally friendly mode of commute, riding on the city's roads is not easy. "Under the Smart City project, we got some dedicated cycle tracks for the first time. But that is not enough as the demand for cycling is increasing and infrastructure should be put in place accordingly. Most professional cyclists go to the outskirts for practice and training," said Mr. Sankaran.

Raghunatha Y.L., a Yelahanka Cyclists group member, said, "There are hardly any lanes dedicated for cyclists. On those roads where lanes for cyclists are available, they have been illegally occupied by motorists. Cars, autos, and bikes are seen parked on these lanes and make them unusable." He added that potholes and poor road conditions are other challenges cyclists are facing.

Nitin Gejtap of Bangalore Randouners, a group of cyclists, said, "Normally, for long distances, we used to go to the highways. In city limits, it is very difficult to do long-distance cycling. For the benefit of cyclists, the authorities should ensure that good roads and dedicated lanes are provided on major roads."

Over 110 cyclists injured, 28 killed in road accidents in last three years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In the last three years, more than 110 cyclists were injured and as many as 28 killed in road accidents in the city. Such accidents are a matter of concern as more cyclists are hitting the road after the outbreak of the pandemic. Lack of road infrastructure, absence of dedicated lanes for the cyclists and growing traffic congestion are posing risks to the lives of cyclists.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) B.R. Ravikanthe Gowda said that most cyclists who got killed in accidents were those who use bicycles daily to commute to work. "Motorists such as car drivers, bikers, and heavy vehicle drivers should realise that pedestrians and cyclists too have rights while using the roads and this is one of the factors leading to accidents. We have also approached civic authorities to provide necessary infrastructure in the interest of the cyclists," he said.

Number of cyclists injured and died in road accidents

Year	Injured	Deaths
2019	44	11
2020	29	5
2021	36	9
2022 (Till April)	10	3

In Bengaluru, barring a few places such as the Outer Ring Road (Silk Board towards K.R. Puram) and some stretches of the central business district, dedicated lanes are not available.

On the ORR, regular cyclists often complain about bikers using the lanes, broken bollards, and poor condition of the lanes. In the absence of lanes, cyclists are forced to use the main lanes. Charan Raj, who works as a security guard, said, "I live near Hebbal and use my bicycle to reach Majestic as I cannot afford other modes of transport. It is difficult to ride a bicycle when there is more traffic. I use the footpath if it is wider, if not, I use the main lanes. Motorists unnecessarily honk at cyclists while crossing the road or hurl abuses." On the other hand, cyclists who go on long rides, including to destinations such as Nandi Hills, have demanded that the authorities should work on providing safe passage for cyclists. One such cyclist, Saurav R. said, "During weekends, many cyclists prefer to go to Nandi Hills or other areas on the outskirts. If the authorities work on providing safe passage, it will help hundreds of cyclists. Riding on highways is very risky as other vehicles move at very high speed."

Commissioner of Directorate of Urban Land Transport V. Manjula said the directorate was working on a cycling network plan across various zones. "We are in discussion with the BBMP on providing the infrastructure. Designs for the development of 120-km cycle lanes on 12 high-density corridors have been shared with the Karnataka Road Development Corporation and other agencies," she said.

Man electrocuted at bus shelter in Hebbal

Accident occurred because of illegally drawn wire to a hoarding: Bescom

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

A 30-year-old man lost his life on Saturday night after coming in contact with a live electrical wire at the bus shelter near the Hebbal police station.

Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Ltd. (Bescom) has said the "fatal and non-departmental accident" took place because of an illegally drawn wire to an advertisement hoarding by a private advertising agency.

"The electrical accident occurred at 9.40 p.m. after the man touched the metal part of the bus shelter," a Bescom official said.

The authorities of the Executive Engineer, Assistant Executive Engineer and Section officer of the Hebbal division of the power utility, who visited the spot after the accident, found an unauthorised extension of low-tension (LT) power through aluminium OH wire which was drawn by the private agency.

The power for the hoarding, which was put up on the bus stand, was also illegally drawn from the pole, the officials said.

"The power installation for the advertising agency was disconnected in December 2020 itself, after the consumer failed to pay the outstanding bill. The bill amount was adjusted from the deposit and power supply was disconnected, but unauthorised power was drawn from the pole by the agency recently," Bescom said in a release.

A senior official said that the vigilance wing of the company will also be filing a complaint against the agency for illegally drawing the power line.

The victim's body was shifted to B.R. Ambedkar Medical College Hospital. A case was registered at the Hebbal police station. However, until Sunday afternoon, the identity of the victim could not be ascertained. "We have sent out his picture to all the police stations and are awaiting responses," a Bescom official said.

READER'S MAIL

Bus terminal has turned into a cesspool

Sir, – Rainwater remains stagnated in front of Kengeri bus terminal for a long time and becomes a breeding place for mosquitoes.

Neither KSRTC/BMTC/BMRCL nor the BBMP is bothered to get the spot fixed which has become an eyesore. The question is whose baby is this? Besides, broken slabs, uneven surface greets travellers both at the entrance and exit points of the terminal. One-fourth of the left side road is not motorable as big solid concrete blocks and stagnated water in front of Kadamba Guestline Hotel add to misery in the poorly lit area.

In the larger interest of road users, I request the authorities concerned to look into this matter seriously and arrange to clean up this spot and re-asphalt the road.

N. NANJUNDASWAMY,
Bengaluru

Fix road permanently

Sir, – For the last two years, the stretch of the 100-ft Road in Indiranagar from the 12th main junction to the 14th main junction is in a bad state with pools of water damaging the bituminised surface. The water pipeline below the main road is leaking badly, resulting in huge wastage of precious water and also causing damage to the road. BBMP authorities, without going into the root cause of the problem, have been repairing portions of the road which gives away after a few days due to the resulting stagnation of water from the leaking pipeline. Both BWSSB and BBMP authorities should sit together and find a permanent solution to the problem, as the damaged road is posing a grave threat to road users.

MAJ. GEN. N.R. ANANTH,
Bengaluru

Readers can write to letters.bangalore @thehindu.co.in

Man who had stolen SUV posing as buyer held

He had used a stolen phone to contact the seller

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Amruthahalli police on Saturday arrested a 36-year-old man who had stolen an SUV from a city-based businessman on the pretext of buying it.

The accused kept a tab on an online platform where vehicles are put up for sale and contacted Ravindra Iluri through a stolen mobile phone with an offer to buy his car. The accused took the SUV on the pretext of taking it for a test drive on January 30 and did not return, the police said.

Based on a complaint, when the police tried to track down the accused through the mobile phone, they found that it was stolen phone and a complaint was filed with the Bagalur police.

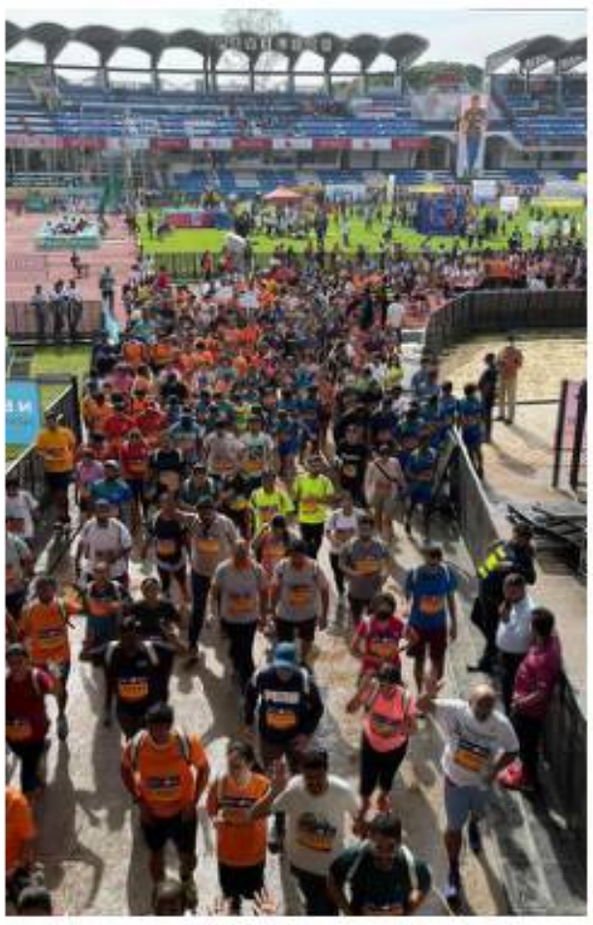
A technical team had the only option of tracking the accused through the IP address. The police finally managed to zero in on M.G. Venkatesh Naik, who works a maintenance personnel at a residential apartment in the city. It was a herculean task as the police team got over 2,500 IP addresses. They had to check each one of them before tracking the accused to the apartment where he was working, the police said.

Detailed questioning led him to confess to the crime, the police said. Based on his confession, the police recovered the car and the mobile phone.

Investigations revealed that Venkatesh was involved in a house break-in and theft in 2011 and had used the stolen money to buy an SUV. The accused wanted his wife to contest the village panchayat election in Bagepalli and had sold his car to fund the election expenses . However, she lost the election and Venkatesh incurred huge loss.

From last year, he had been trying to steal a car similar to the one he had sold and chanced upon the ad on the portal.

Runners all



Participants in the 'Maja Run' held as part of TCS World 10K 2022 at Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru on Sunday. The run was flagged off by Ashwini Puneeth Rajkumar. •K. MURALI KUMAR

Power shutdown today

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

There will be no power supply on Monday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in view of works related to converting overhead lines to underground cables. According to a Bescom Whitefield Division release, the areas that will be affected are: Prithvi Layout, ECC Road, Whitefield, Gayathri Layout, Basavanapura Main Road, Ayyappanagar, K.R. Puram, Brigade Residential Apartment, Mahadevapura, Hoody, RHB Colony, and Venkateshwara Layout.

Gold smuggling racket unearthed, two arrested

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Customs officials unearthed a gold smuggling racket and arrested two men who tried to smuggle gold paste concealed in the waistline of their undergarments at Kempegowda International Airport on Friday.

Based on a tip-off from officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the Customs officials confronted two passengers soon after they landed at the airport from Dubai and took them into custody. The officials, after a detailed inquiry, recovered 2,843 grams of gold paste worth ₹1,44,78,607 from them. The duo have been taken into custody for further investigation to ascertain their smuggling network. This is the second crackdown on gold smuggling with a similar *modus operandi*, as last Sunday the officials caught two men from Kozhikode, Kerala, at the airport and recovered gold paste worth an estimated ₹97.4 lakh that had been concealed in custom-stitched undergarments.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client's 1) Sri. Nagappa H.A @ Thalavari Nagappa S/o. Late. Aerappa, aged about 62 years, r/at.No.263,Near RailwayGate, Shanthinagar, Hoodi, Bangalore-560048 2) Smt. Parvathamma W/o. Sri H.A. Nagappa, aged about 53 years, r/at. No.263, Near Railway Gate, Shanthinagar, Hoodi, Bangalore-560048 3) Sri. Manjunath H.N S/o. Sri. Nagappa H.A, aged about 32 years, r/at Nagappa Building, ITPB Main Road, Bangalore-560048 4) Smt. Shashikala W/o. Sri. M. Muniraju, aged about 40 years, r/at. No.263, Near Railway Gate, Shanthinagar, Hoodi, Bangalore-560048 5) Smt.H.N. Annamma W/o. H.K. Ravi Kumar, aged about 31 years, r/at No. 54, Hanumanthapura, Nelamangala Taluk, Bilenakote Post, bengaluru Rural-562111,6) Smt. H.N. Sumithra D/o. Sri. H.A.Nagappa, aged about 29 years, r/at. Thalavari nagappa Garden, Sree Gurumurthyswamy nilaya, Near Hoodi Railway Station, Hoodi, Bengaluru-560048, 7) Smt. M.Nandini, D/o. Muniraju, aged about 22 years, r/at.No.428, Shanthinagar, Near Railway Gate, Hoodi, Bangalore-560048, 8) Mr. M. Madhu, S/o. Sri. Muniraj, aged about 20 years, r/at. No.428, Shanthinagar, Near Railway Gate, Hoodi, Bangalore-560 048, have jointly canceled the general power of attorney dated 28.09.2021 executed in favour of SRI. K. UMA MAHESHWARA REDDY, S/o. Sri. K. Veera Reddy, aged about 43 years, r/at.No.325/C, 2nd Main, Vinayaka Layout Service Road, Nagarabhavi, Bangalore-560072, in respect of the below mentioned schedule property vide legal notice dated 25.04.2022 through RPAD & UCP and also by WhatsApp message to WhatsApp No.9845327887 on 12.05.2022. Any person/s dealing with the schedule property with the above mentioned person will be doing so at their risk and the same shall not be binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL that piece and parcel of the property land bearing Sy.No.42, measuring 1.30.10 acres, situated at Kodigehalli Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, consisting of 32 coconut Trees, 2 Sappota Trees, 4 Mango Trees and 3 Jack Fruit Trees and bounded on the

EAST BY : Remaining Land Sy.No.42
WEST BY : Private Property
NORTH BY: Remaining Land Sy.No.42
SOUTH BY: Road

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PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHRIMANTH DIGGI s/o Girmalappa Diggi, R/O No. 2/345, Rudrawadi, Tq Aland, Dist Kalaburagi-585314, I have changed my name from Shrimanth Girmalappa Diggi to Shrimanth Diggi, vide affidavit no IN-KA26248123985603U dated 02-Feb-2022

It is for general information that I, Rachana Reddy Ramakrishna D/o Ramakrishna Reddy Gudisevari Palli Krishna Reddy Ex. wife of Vikram Chandra Mohan, R/o: 158/F, 4th Main Rd, 3 Rd Block, 3rd Stage Baseveshwaranagar, Bengaluru-560079 do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I got divorced from my Ex. husband Vikram Chandra Mohan vide divorce decree no.M.C./3362/2020 date 30.06.2021and Henceforth i have changed my minor son name Neil Vikram Nair aged 4 years to Neil Vikram Reddy Nair for all purposes.

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, NEELAMMA Diggi w/o Shrimanth Diggi at post H No 2/345 Rudrawadi Tq Aland Dist Kalaburagi – 585314, I have changed my name from Neelamma Shrimanti Diggi to Neelamma Diggi vide affidavit no IN-KA26246567986759U dated 02-Feb-2022.

I, SHIVAPUTRA DIGGI s/o Shrimanth Diggi, R/O no 2/345, Rudrawadi, Tq Aland, Dist Kalaburagi-585314, I have changed my name from Shrimantaraya to Shrimanth Diggi, vide affidavit no IN-KA26244090396947U dated 02-Feb-2022.

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KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)
TENDER NOTIFICATION (e-Procurement mode only)
Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited invites Tenders for the following works

1. No.:SEE/TR(M)/BRAZ/EE/AEE-1/F-T6/2022-23/490 Date: 12.05.2022
Enquiry No:KPTCL/SEE/TR(M)/BRAZ/P.TR REPAIRS 100MVA CHM/EPR-668/CALL-6 Dtd:12.05.2022 for Dismantling, Transportation (to & fro), repair of Sick Power Transformer, Testing, Assembling, Erection and Commissioning of repaired sick power transformer of rating 100mva, 220/66/11kv, Apex make, Sl.No: T-1035/05, year of manufacture: 1998 lying at 220/66/11kv receiving station Chinthamani on Total Turnkey Basis in KPTCL, Transmission (Maintenance), BRAZ Circle (Call-6).

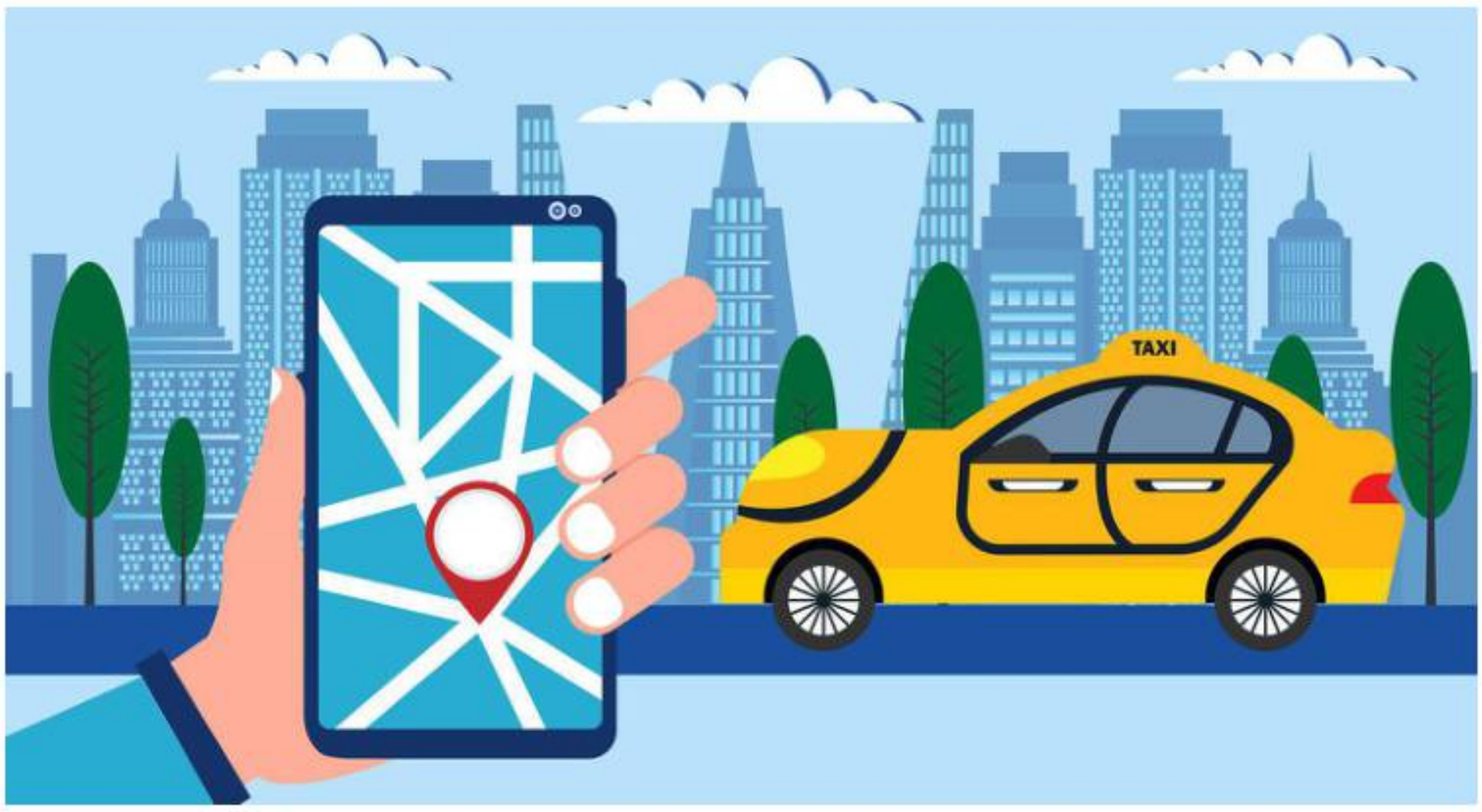
2. No.:SEE/TR(M)/BRAZ/EE/AEE-1/F-T6/2022-23/504 Date: 13.05.2022
Enquiry No:KPTCL/SEE/TR(M)/BRAZ/TR REPAIR - 66KV CHINTAMANI /EPR-697/CALL-2 Date:13.05.2022 for "Dismantling, Transportation (to & fro), repair of sick power Transformer, Testing, Assembling, Erection and Commissioning of repaired sick power transformer of rating 20mva, 66/11kv, Andrew Yule make, Sl.No: 13215, year of manufacture:2004, re-commissioned at 66kv Chintamani on 15.06.2018. Lying at 66/11kv Chintamani sub-station in TL&SS division, Chintamani on Total Turnkey Basis & percentage basis" (Call-2).

3. No.:SEE/TR(M)/BRAZ/EE/AEE-4/F-T6/2022-23/517 Date: 13.05.2022
Enquiry No:KPTCL/SEE/TR(M)/BRAZ/AEE-4/SWG Devanagundhi/EPR-700 dtd: 12.05.2022 for "Augmentation of 11kV Switchgears(2B+1BC+10F+2CB+1AP) & Annunciator panel from PCVCB to MCVCB, and providing of Power cable duct at 66/11kV Substation, Devanagundhi in TL&SS division BIAL Begur, Hosakote Taluk, Bengaluru Rural district" coming under the jurisdiction of TR(M.), BRAZ circle, KPTCL, Bengaluru on Partial Turnkey Basis

The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject enquiry in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website www.kptcl.karnataka.gov.in on hyperlink "eProcurement-KPTCL"or directly logging on to website "https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in/" for Sl No.1 & 2 on or after 16.05.2022 & Sl No.3 on or after 18.05.2022.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Elecl.)
Transmission (M), BRAZ, KPTCL, UAS Campus, Hebbal, Bengaluru-24

THE HINDU
Text & Context



ABSTRACT

The incremental disruption of taxi labour

How radio taxi services became a precursor to the current app-based taxi aggregators

THE GIST

- In Delhi, before the advent of radio taxis, the black and yellow taxis dominated. Mehram Nagar was the anchor that connected the owners and the drivers, and this connection provided them with the impetus to form an association strong enough to negotiate with the authorities and operate independent of third parties.
- The call centre-based radio taxis attracted many drivers as the system promised more profit. However, the model failed to provide drivers with the number of assignments they had been promised. Deposits, rents and passenger rating systems were used as disciplinary measures, giving passengers and companies more power over the drivers.
- The exploitation of drivers by taxi companies saw retaliation but the introduction of app-based aggregators such as Ola and Uber and the awakening of the platform economy muffled this labour militancy.

REBECCA ROSE VARGHESE

Kumar, Mithilesh, 'Before the Gig Economy: Tracing the Transformations in Delhi's Taxi Industry', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol 57, Issue No. 12, March 19, 2022

Among the many studies conducted on platform economies, Mithilesh Kumar's article, 'Before the Gig Economy: Tracing the Transformations in Delhi's Taxi Industry' draws attention to the transition of taxi services from traditional to radio and finally to app-based services. It highlights the intricate changes that came about in the owner-worker relations and focusses on the ever-pervasive nature of platform economies and the way it has modified and refined the systems of surveillance to control labour.

The study conducted between November 2013 and January 2014 at various sites in Delhi focussed on Mehram Nagar, a colony close to the Delhi airport. Most of the residents there depended on the airport for a livelihood as many of the taxi drivers and owners hailed from the colony and the strong kinship among them played a major role in the management of the flexible yet hierarchical work culture.

From traditional to radio

Before the advent of radio taxis, the 'kaali-peeli' (black and yellow) taxis dominated the sector in Delhi. These local cabs could be seen parked around hotels, airports, and railway stations haphazardly. At Terminal one of the Delhi airport, taxis parked on PWD roads without even a formal permit formed queues. Each taxi that came in reported to the designated office and was then allotted space and passengers. Despite the seemingly chaotic nature of the system, it functioned smoothly even during rush hours.

Mehram Nagar was the anchor that connected the owners and the drivers, and this umbilical connection provided them with the impetus to form an association strong enough to negotiate with the authorities and operate a service quite independent of the functioning of the airport. The flow of workers into the taxi industry in Delhi was for long managed informally by similar associations and unions.

The call centre-based radio taxis attracted many drivers as the system promised more profit. However, in the final analysis, it wasn't very different from the old system except that now the companies controlled the drivers who were expected to pay a daily lease on the assurance of a minimum number of assignments. Drivers had to pay an initial deposit for the cars as well as pay for the fuel cost.

Labour struggles

The scheme wasn't as rosy as it was initially presented. The advanced technology-based method of gaining customers stopped providing drivers with the number of assignments they had been promised. The GPS tracking devices were also used to record their earnings, and the company made sure that once the drivers had earned a certain amount, they were not assigned new passengers, lest they make more profit and work for lesser hours. Deposits, rents and passenger rating systems were used as disciplinary measures, giving passengers and companies more power over the drivers. The fair wages and protection that existed in the traditional system were replaced with new parameters wherein the surplus generated was extracted instead of being distributed between labourers.

The transition of radio-taxi services to an owner-driver system saw new changes as it attracted drivers with the incentive of independence as they 'owned' the cars.

The transition of radio-taxi services like Meru to an owner-driver system – the precursor to the gig economy model – saw new changes as it attracted drivers with the incentive of independence as they 'owned' the cars. However, the bank loans facilitated by the company which eventually led to the drivers working until they could pay off their debt and additional interest was a well-concealed trap which ensured constant supply of labour for such radio-taxi services.

In the article, the author substantiates why the payment of bank interest should not be looked at as mere debt payoffs, but as living labour-power monetised while always being a captive of the capitalist who ensures a constant supply of it (labour) through methods of surveillance. It was the relation to wages produced and the already existing commodities (assets) that changed with the coming of radio taxis, as the workers' share of the commodity produced – the security deposit – was used by the capitalists to increase the intensity of work by the drivers.

Attempt to unionise

The exploitation of drivers by taxi companies saw retaliation. As unrest spread throughout the country, drivers began to unionise. Strikes were held in all major cities with the demand that they be recognised as workers who deserved minimum leisure hours instead of being branded as entrepreneurs.

The introduction of app-based aggregators such as Ola and Uber and the awakening of the platform economy however muffled the labour militancy. New hopes within the technologically-advanced services led to newer forms of struggles and associations in the platform economy. Though the innovation in the new form of economy was the platform's ability to monetise non-monetised assets and link the owner to consumers willing to pay and share assets, the chances of such monetisation largely depended on labour.

The app-based aggregator perfected the form of surveillance and control of labour by removing the labour-driven call centres with algorithm-based applications, increasing their profit at the cost of labour.

Tracing the transition of taxi services from the traditional to app-based aggregator model, the author explains how the grip of the traditional industry, which was based on the owners' native ties to the city and a strong association-based political economy, was first disrupted by alienating the driver and was then perfected with the coming of the gig economy.

Though the paper delves deep into the transformation of work arrangements caused due to the transition in taxi services, the changes in wages that came with this transition do not come into the folds of its core arguments.

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz to test your knowledge of the Buddha and Buddhism on the occasion of Buddha Purnima that falls on May 16 this year

1 Simple one to begin with. What does 'Buddha' mean in Sanskrit and what was the birth name of the individual who propagated the religion known as Buddhism?

2 Name the festival, observed in many Asian countries, that commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Gautama Buddha on the same day?

3 Name the places of the Buddha's first sermon and parinirvana that are amongst the holiest sites in the religion.

4 What is the Pali term used in the religion for the three characteristics of all existence and beings (impermanence, non-self, and suffering).

5 Back to the basics. According to scholars, at what age did the prince leave his home, attain awakening and leave his mortal coils?

6 In the Buddhist tradition, what is the name given to the future Buddha, said to be a bodhisattva residing in the Tushita heaven, who will preach anew the dharma?

7 Apart from the Mahabodhi Temple Complex and the Sanchi monuments, which are the two other UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India associated with Buddhism?

8 Simple one. Who is the present head of the Dge-lugs-pa (Yellow Hat) order of Tibetan Buddhists?

◄ Name this religious structure and what relic is it said to house?

Compiled by: V.V. Ramanan

Please send in your answers to the **dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in**

Questions (abridged) and Answers to the May 13 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The name of this movement is an allusion to the Revolutions of 1848, sometimes referred to as the 'Springtime of Nations.' **Ans: Arab Spring**
2. Jeff Widener is best known for this image taken in Tiananmen Square in the aftermath of the protests of 1989. **Ans: Tank Man**
3. This environmental Indian movement originated in 1973 in Uttarakhand. This movement later adopted the Hindi word for 'embrace' as its title. **Ans: Chipko Movement**
4. In Afrikaans, this term means 'separateness', or 'the state of being apart'. **Ans: Apartheid**
5. July 14 is observed as a national holiday in France to mark an event from 1789, in which revolutionaries seized control of this political prison. **Ans: The Bastille**
6. This poem, written by Bismil Azimabadi in 1921, is an ode to Indian freedom fighters. **Ans: Sarfaroshi Ki Tamanna**
7. Founded by Tarana Burke, this movement became a social phenomenon in October 2017. **Ans: The MeToo Movement**
Visual: The entity that separated a nation in Europe. **Ans: The Berlin Wall**

Early Birds: K. Chandramohan| Aakriti Sinha| Adya Jha| Pushkar Singh| Akshay Jade

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Small potatoes or small beer?

Don't be a person who always has a chip on their shoulder

S. UPENDRAN

What is the meaning of the expression 'small potatoes'? (R. Geetha, Hyderabad)
This expression of American origin is mostly used in informal contexts. It has been part of the English language for nearly three hundred years. When you say that something is 'small potatoes', what you are suggesting is that it is not important or that it is inexpensive. The expression can be used with people as well. When you refer to someone in an organisation as being small potatoes, what you are suggesting is that he is an insignificant individual – he is not very high up in the corporate ladder. In British English, such an individual is referred to as 'small beer'.

The allowance that my father gives me is small potatoes compared to what you get.

In a place like Monte Carlo where all the rich people live, someone with a few million dollars would be considered small potatoes.

Naveen will not be able to intervene. He's small beer in the company.

Is it okay to say, 'He was wearing a fine dress'? (K. Harini, Madurai)
In terms of grammar, there is nothing wrong with the sentence. But for a native speaker of English, when the word 'dress' is used as a noun, it is used to refer to a piece of clothing that is normally worn by girls or ladies. Men generally do not wear a dress – unless of course you are referring to something that an individual wears on certain formal occasions – for example, a king wearing his ceremonial dress. In all other contexts, the word is mostly used with the female of the species. You can, however, compliment a man on his dress, if you find him wearing a skirt or a saree. When 'dress' is used as a verb, it can be used with both men and women. He's/She's always neatly dressed.

What is the meaning and origin of the expression 'have a chip on one's shoulder'? (N. Meenakshi, Chennai)
This relatively old expression is frequently used in informal contexts to refer to someone who is angry all the time. The individual may have an inferiority complex, and therefore takes offence at everything someone says – he may think that the person is making fun of him. He strongly believes that people have treated him very unfairly in the past, and is therefore constantly itching for a fight – making him a person to avoid, for he is very unpleasant to be with.

Rahul has had chip on his shoulder ever since the CEO turned down his proposal.

Ever since her parents separated, Nalini has had a chip on her shoulder.

The chip in the expression has nothing to do with a potato chip or a chipped bone placed on one's shoulder. In this case, it refers to a small piece of wood. In the past, angry young boys used to place a piece of wood on their shoulder and walk around; it was a challenge to the other kids on the block to knock the chip off his shoulder. When somebody dared to knock the chip off, it always resulted in a fight.

Potatoes are to food what sensible shoes are to fashion.

-Linda Wells

upendrankye@gmail.com

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, MAY. 16	
RISE 05:54	SET 18:38
RISE 18:58	SET 05:49
TUESDAY, MAY. 17	
RISE 05:54	SET 18:38
RISE 20:05	SET 06:43
WEDNESDAY, MAY. 18	
RISE 05:54	SET 18:38
RISE 21:12	SET 07:43

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	32	24
Mysuru	30	20
Bengaluru	30	22

Bengaluru Today
27°C The weather will be comfortable but humid. Night will be pleasant. Few spells of moderate rain and thundershower will occur.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
26°C A slight warm and humid weather to prevail.Night will be pleasant. One or two spells of rain and thundershower to occur.

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THE HINDU
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Karnataka has the second highest dengue cases after T.N.

May 16 is observed as National Dengue Day

AFSHAN YASMEEN
BENGALURU

Karnataka has the second highest number of dengue cases in the country this year. While Tamil Nadu tops the list with 2,361 cases, Karnataka follows with 1,417 cases reported from January till April 30 this year.

According to data from the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), under the Union Ministry's Directorate General of Health Services, Karnataka has always been one among the top ten States in the country with a high incidence of dengue.

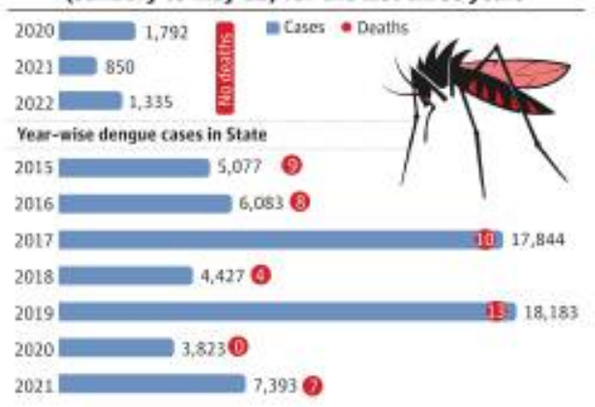
Alternate years

Health officials said dengue in Karnataka has been following a pattern of spiking every alternate year. The number of dengue cases in the State had gone up from 3,358 in 2014 to 5,077 in 2015, 6,083 in 2016 and 17,844 in 2017. In 2017, Karnataka was behind Tamil Nadu and Kerala that reported 23,294 and 19,994 dengue cases, respectively. Karnataka reported 4,427 cases in 2018, 18,183 in 2019, 3,823 in 2020 and 7,393 in 2021. Officials said the rise in cases this year is seen mainly in urban areas, where construction work has begun after the decline in COVID-19 cases.

According to Karnataka's Health Department data, there has been a 36.33% rise in dengue incidence this year - from January till May 12 compared to the corresponding period last year. Till May 12 this year, 1,335 cases were reported while 850 cases had been reported in the corresponding period last year. In 2020, 1,792 cases were recorded during the same period. In the last one month alone, nearly 300 cases have been added to the State's tally.

Of the 1,335 cases this year, the most (393) were reported in February while 302 were recorded in March. In January, a rise of over 86% was recorded compared to the corresponding month last year. While 33 cases were recorded in January 2021, 244 cases were reported in the same month this year. However, there have been no deaths so far.

A BBMP employee in Bengaluru using a fogging machine to clear mosquitoes as part an intense fumigation drive in the city. • BUSINESSLINE



Contributing factors

Experts involved in vector borne disease control programmes said the transmission of dengue is governed by various ecological factors. This coupled with unplanned developmental activities, improper water storage, migration and improper solid waste management also play a crucial role in the upsurge of dengue cases. Dengue-causing *aedes aegypti* mosquitoes breed in freshwater and bite during the day.

Susanta Kumar Ghosh, former scientist and head, field station of ICMR-National Institute of Malaria Research in Bengaluru, said although dengue was earlier associated with the monsoon, it has now become a self-limiting viral fever which is prevalent all through the year.

Robust reporting

State Health Commissioner Randeep D. told *The Hindu* that the high incidence in Karnataka is because of a robust reporting system. "Unseasonal rains, rapid urbanisation and construction activities have added to the problem. We have intensified awareness and are regularly conducting campaigns to educate people about preventive measures," he said.

K.V. Trilok Chandra, BBMP's Special Commissioner (Health), attributed the dengue spurt in the city to intermittent rains and resultant water logging. "Our health workers are conducting larvae surveys via door-to-door visits. We have intensified awareness and preventive measures. To mark National Dengue Day on May 16, a jatha is being taken out to make people aware about prevention measures," he said.

Bengaluru's dengue tally shoots up to 302

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

With 22.6% of the State's total cases this year being reported in Bengaluru, the city continued to record the highest number of positive cases. From 232 cases in April, Bengaluru's dengue tally shot up to 302 on May 12.

After BBMP, a significant rise has been recorded in Udupi, Mysuru, Koppal, Chitradurga and Vijayapura districts from January to May compared to last year.

Data showed that Udupi has recorded the highest number (150) - from January to May - among districts other than Bengaluru. Udupi is followed by Mysuru (127), Koppal (87), Chitradurga (79) and Vijayapura (48).

Dengue-causing *aedes aegypti* mosquitoes breed in freshwater and bite during the day.

During sunup

After a night full of rain, Bengaluru sky was painted in a riot of colours at sunrise on Sunday. A view from Hudson Circle. • K. MURALI KUMAR

Wheat prices see correction after export ban

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The Union Government's decision to ban the export of wheat with immediate effect has already had an impact on the soaring wheat prices in Karnataka. Hours after the export ban order, the price of wheat saw a 2% to 3% correction on Saturday, industry insiders said.

3.17% drop

"A kilogram of mill quality wheat delivered in Bengaluru was trading at ₹25.20 on Friday and post the export ban, the price was ₹24.40, a drop by 3.17%," said M. K. Dattaraj, managing director, Krishna Flour Mills, and past president of Roller Flour Millers Federation of India.

He said with the export ban, the price of wheat was expected to see a correction further, which will also impact atta, rava, and other wheat-related products.

Impact of shortage

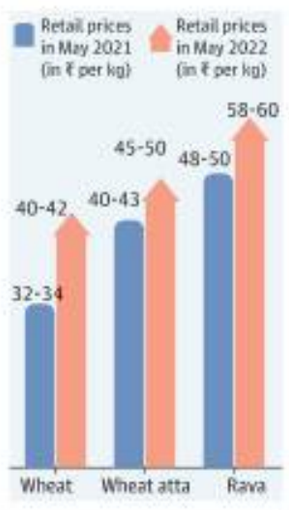
Exports and the resultant shortages in the domestic market had led to a spike in prices of wheat and related products – on an average around 25% when compared with the prices same time last year – over the last two months.

Impact of war

The Ukraine-Russia war has disrupted global supply chains as both countries were major exporters of wheat and related products to Europe and other western countries. This created a demand for wheat in the global market, triggering exports from India.

"Usually exports from the country were less than 1% of our wheat production. But this year, it has already crossed 15%, creating a shortage in the domestic market. Even the Government of India is unable to find wheat at minimum support price in the market for the public distribution system, triggering an export ban," explained Ramesh Chandra Lahoti, a senior foodgrain merchant and vice- president of the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The export ban order came days after the Retail Inflation for April was revealed to be 7.79%, a eight year high.



Kannada film producer dies in hit-and-run

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

A 64-year-old Kannada film producer was killed in a hit-and-run accident at Gauravnagar in Kumaraswamy Layout police station limits on Sunday.

The deceased, Anekal Balraj, while returning home from his morning walk, was crossing the road to go to an ATM when the accident occurred.

Head injuries

A bike rider knocked down Balraj and sped away. Due to the impact, Balraj sustained severe head injuries and was rushed to a nearby private hospital, where he succumbed two hours later, the police said.

The K.S. Layout Traffic police are trying to track down the bike rider.

Balraj had been working in the film industry for the last 25 years and had produced many famous movies, including *Kariya*.

Inclusion of Hedgewar's speech as a lesson draws flak

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Students' organisations have strongly condemned the State government's decision to omit a lesson on Bhagat Singh and include a speech of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) founder Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in the Class X Kannada revised textbook.

All-India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO) and All-India Save Education Committee (AISEC) have slammed the government's decision.

"The founders of our renaissance movement and many great freedom fighters had hoped for democratic, scientific, and secular education. But all political parties that have ruled so far have been working out their own agendas in textbooks," they said.

"In the Kannada textbook, a lesson on a great revolutionary who sacrificed his life at the age of 23, Bhagat Singh, has been omitted, while a speech made by the founder of the RSS, which does not unite people but spreads communal hatred, has been added. This makes it clear that the ruling BJP and the Sangh Parivar have no regard for the great revolutionaries of the country's independence movement, including Bhagat Singh. A lesson which condemns racial hatred, 'Mruga Mattu Sundari' by P. Lankesh, and Sara Aboobacker's 'Yuddha' and A.N. Murthi Rao's 'Vyaghrageethe' have been removed," AIDSO said in a statement.

"Already, people across the State had raised questions about the committee set up for textbook revision by the BJP government and its chairman. It is now proven that the government constituted this committee to include BJP agenda in education. AIDSO calls upon people and students to resist the government's propaganda of narrow-minded ideology. We demand that the texts removed be immediately added," the organisation added.

FROM PAGE ONE

It's back to school for students from today

Mansoor Ali Khan, president of Delhi Public School, said, "There is no compromise with COVID-19 norms. We strictly follow all the protocols. To fill the learning gap, we are implementing bridge courses for all the students."

Vaccination

Private schools too are excited to welcome back students. D. Shashikumar, general secretary, Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools, said, "Students are happy and parents are very eager to send their children to school. But the real challenge is loss of academics and motivation, and providing counselling and vaccination. According to the government instructions, we will make necessary arrangements to vaccinate all students over the age of 12."

Bus pass

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation too has come forward to help school students by extending the validity of the previous year's bus pass up to June 30.

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Cong. ticket policy unlikely to impact State's political families

Most leaders and their kin may be exempted from the one family, one ticket rule

KARNATAKA BUREAU
MYSURU/KALABURAGI

Notwithstanding the initial stir created in the Congress over the party's one family, one ticket policy that came under the lens at the ongoing Chintan Shivir in Udaipur, most political families belonging to the grand old party in Karnataka are unlikely to face the axe in the coming elections.

For, the exemption clause in the policy of five years of prior work in the party will make the family members of most of the prominent Congress leaders in the State eligible for ticket in the next Assembly or Lok Sabha polls scheduled for 2023 and 2024, respectively.

While former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra Siddaramaiah has been an MLA since 2018, veteran Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge's son Priyank Kharge has been an MLA since 2013 and has even served as a Minister for IT and BT. Similarly, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president D.K. Shivakumar's brother D.K. Suresh has been an MP since 2013 while Shamanur Mallikarjun, son of veteran Congressman and president of All-India Veerashaiva Mahasabha Shamanur Shivashankarappa, too had served as an MLA and as a Minister earlier.

Many other Congress politicians' children or relatives in North Karnataka too are likely to pass the five-year rule.

KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar with Sonia Gandhi at the Congress meeting at Udaipur in Rajasthan. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

For instance, Ajay Singh and Vijay Singh, sons of late Chief Minister Dharam Singh; Sunil Gouda Patil, brother of senior Congressman and former Minister M.B. Patil, Vijay Kulkarni, brother of former Minister Vinay Kulkarni, have all worked for the Congress for more than five years.

However, though Satish Jarkiholi is the only one among the Jarkiholi brothers, who is in the Congress, the rule may cast a shadow on the political prospects of his children Rahul and Priyanka, who made an entry into politics only during the recent byelections to the Lok Sabha from Belagavi in 2021.

Meanwhile, senior journalist and political commentator M. Gautham Machaiah said the one family, one ticket proposal was an "eyewash", but added that it was also "an honest admission by the Congress that dynastic politics, which exists at all levels of the organisation is one of the reasons for the party's decline."

The fact that an exception would be made in the case of children or relatives of lawmakers if they have worked for the party exceptionally well during the past five years is a loophole through which most will get through, he said. "If nothing, the proposal will at least facilitate a debate on hereditary politics, where power is passed on from parents to children just like the erstwhile kings," he said.

Concern over Bajrang Dal camp held in Kodagu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSURU

Photographs and videos of Bajrang Dal members participating in a camp conducted by the organisation in Ponnampet, Kodagu district, has gone viral on social media with concerns being raised about the alleged distribution of arms.

The training camp was conducted at Sai Shankar Educational Institute in Ponnampet and there are photographs of daggers being worshipped with a few members brandishing it.

When contacted, a functionary of the organisation confirmed that the camp did take place from May 5 to 11 and nearly 400 Bajrang Dal members took part in it.

However, he said that it was an annual programme and is held in different places every year during which the participants are imparted lessons on various aspects of religion, history besides being trained in self-defence.

With respect to the arms, the functionary said the participants were trained in their usage as part of self-defence, which was included in the programme but no arms was distributed as being alleged. The police said they have not received any complaints so far nor had any case been registered while Deputy Commissioner B.C. Satheesha said he was yet to receive the details of the incident.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Damage for a cause

What happens when playing politics gets priority over restoring normalcy in a communally sensitive situation? Some recent developments in Hubballi after violence erupted over a derogatory post illustrate this.

Apart from police vehicles, a temple and a hospital were among those targeted by miscreants. BJP leaders quickly swung into action and started visiting the temple, which had a few window panes broken, in batches. In any other situation, the authorities would have got the window panes replaced at the earliest. However, the "scene of attack" was kept intact, so that it could remain on display and be explained to every visiting BJP leader.

So much was the concern towards the incident that even after a week, the broken panes were kept intact until BJP State unit president visited the place and blamed the Opposition leaders for the violence. It was only after the ruling party exhausted all potential visitors that the temple management committee was allowed get the window panes repaired. It so happened that during the period of BJP visitors, the sizes of the stones pelted also had "grown" in size much to the surprise of cameramen covering these visits.

To the beat of drums

Weeks after former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah created a stir on social media with his folk dance at Siddaramanahundi, his native village in Mysuru, it was the turn of former Minister G.T. Deve Gowda

(*in picture*) to shake a leg at the inaugural ceremony of a temple in his Assembly constituency of Chamundeshwari.

It did not take long for the 70-year-old Mr. Gowda to join a group of merry-makers at the inaugural ceremony of the Sri Lakshmidevi Temple at Hosakamanakoppalu village on the outskirts of Mysuru on Friday and dance to the beats of traditional drums.

However, it was not Mr. Gowda's first public display of dancing. He has often gyrated and shaken his leg at public functions, much to the appreciation of onlookers.

Mr. Gowda had not lost an opportunity to sprint after inaugurating a running event during the Dasara festivities of 2018 when he was the Minister in charge of Mysuru district.

That he had to give up his run mid-way after a wardrobe malfunction - his dhoti came loose and he tripped - is a different matter.

Moving gesture

Karnataka Rashtra Samiti, founded by Ravi Krishna Reddy, aims to fight the coming elections with the participation of the public. Whenever they travel, party workers seek public contributions.

During their recent visit to Hassan, as they were interacting with the public on one of the busy streets in the city, a young man, who had followed the party's activities, stopped and looked for cash in his pockets to offer some to the party. And then, he asked the party volunteers to stay at the spot for some time and that he would come back in a few minutes.

After a couple of minutes, he returned and offered ₹2,000. He told the party office-bearers that he had been working as an operator of an earthmover. When he looked for cash in his pockets, he found only ₹50. Hence, he went to an ATM kiosk and withdrew money. The party leaders were moved by his gesture. Mr. Reddy said workers of his party had witnessed many such incidents during their campaign.

"We have purchased pre-owned tempo travellers for our campaign from the money offered by the public. There are thousands of people who want to support parties that do not woo voters by offering liquor or cash," he said.

GIRISH PATTANASHETTI
LAIQH A. KHAN
SATHISH G.T.

'India won't get back to good economic situation if people don't raise their voice'

NITI Aayog is doling out facts that the BJP government wants, says Siddaramaiah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that if people do not realise the dire economic scenario that the country is in and raise their voice, India will not be able to get back to a good economic situation that prevailed in the past.

"The country's economy has been on a decline day by day. The Centre is twisting facts to ensure people do not get to know the reality. The NITI Aayog that replaced Planning Commission is doling out facts that the Bharatiya Janata Party government wants," he said at the Congress Chintan Shivir in Udaipur.

He pointed out that the National Sample Survey Organisation's surveys that provided the ground data on economic situation had been stopped.

> **The Centre's policy has been ruining the economy of States. Not only has debt increased but the fiscal deficit has also increased. States are also facing the problem of revenue deficit.**
>
> SIDDARAMAIAH
> Former Chief Minister

He said that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, NITI Aayog and the Reserve Bank of India are playing to the tunes of the government and they have forgotten the interest of the country. "The Centre's policy has been ruining the economy of States. Not only has debt increased but the fiscal deficit has also increased. States are also facing the problem of revenue deficit," he said.

Relief to corporates

Mr. Siddaramaiah pointed out that the Narendra Modi government has provided relief to corporates by reducing tax by 8% whereas the voters who brought him to power are reeling under price rise of essential commodities, including petrol, diesel and LPG. Urging the government to increase corporate tax, the former Chief Minister suggested that the GST regime should be aligned to the federal spirit and protect economy of States.

Though the country has been affected by price rise, he said that the BJP was trying to raise communal and caste tensions to divert the attention of the people. "The Centre is struggling to protect itself from its failure," Mr. Siddaramaiah said.

Central OBC list: Veerashaiva Mahasabha stands firm on inclusion of all sub-sects

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In the election year, the BJP that has been besieged with demands from various caste groups for change of categories or status in reservation has another problem on the platter. On Sunday, the Akhila Bharatha Veerashaiva Mahasabha reiterated its earlier demand and urged the State government to recommend inclusion of all Veerashaiva-Lingayat sub-sects in the Central OBC list.

"The State government should immediately send the memorandum to add all the Veerashaiava-Lingayat sub-sects to the Centre for inclusion in the Central OBC list. The memorandum has been given on multiple occasions earlier," Mahasabha's secretary general Eshwar Khandre told presspersons here after the general body meeting. He said: "If it is not done, the general body of the mahasabha has passed a resolution to launch agitation at the hobli level and taluk level demanding the same to bring pressure on the government."

Currently, 14 of the 89 Veerashaiva-Lingayat sub-sects are in the Central OBC list for education and employment avenues, and the demand for inclusion of all the sub-sects that are spread across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Goa has been pending for some time.

Incidentally, an attempt by the then Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa in November 2020 to secure State Cabinet nod to recommend all Veerashaiva-Lingayat sub-sects for the OBC status in the Central list had been allegedly nixed by the BJP Central leadership owing to political reasons.

The rise of BJP has been largely credited to a huge support by the Veerashaiava-Lingayats, especially in Bombay-Karnataka and Hyderabad-Karnataka regions, and the mahasabha's resolution increases the pressure on the BJP.

"A large population of Veerashaiva-Lingayats has been denied opportunities in education and employment since they are not part of Central OBC list. The demand is being made to set right the anomaly," Mr. Khandre, who is also Congress working president, said. He, however, refused to react on the political implications of the demand by the community that has been reiterated in the election year.

Mahasabha sources said that the demand has not been new as the community had been petitioning the State government for a long time to recommend the community for inclusion to the OBC list, and a similar request has been made to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai too.

Meanwhile, the mahasabha on Sunday urged the State government to install the statue of 12th century saint-philosopher Basavanna on the Vidhana Soudha premises as per an earlier decision of the Cabinet.

Another significant decision taken in the general body meeting was renaming the Akhila Bharatha Veerashaiva Mahasabha as Akhila Bharath Veerashaiva-Lingayat Mahasabha, a long pending demand from the sub-sects of Lingayats.

NIT-K aiming to create a carbon neutral campus

It has designed and developed 11 electric vehicles for use by its students, faculty, and staff members

RAVIPRASAD KAMILA
MANGALURU

In its initiative to make the sprawling campus spread over about 300 acres carbon neutral, the National Institute of Technology-Karnataka (NIT-K) at Surathkal has now designed and developed 11 electric vehicles on its own for use by its students, faculty, and staff members.

The institute has also built a solar-powered charging station to feed the e-vehicles, thanks to major financial support for its e-Mobility Projects at the Centre for System Design (CSD) by its alumni and donors.

The e-vehicles include three scooters, a foldable scooter, two bikes, and five cycles.

Pruthviraj U., Head, E-Mobility Projects, told *The Hindu* that of the two bikes one is being used by the institute's security personnel for campus surveillance. Another bike has been given to the Forest Department for the surveillance in the Kudremukh National Park area. The other vehicles are in use on the campus and are geo-fenced.

The e-bike designed and developed by NIT-K, Surathkal. •RAVIPRASAD KAMILA

"The initiative began when the COVID-19 lockdown began. The team comprising students, research scholars and faculty from different disciplines of science and technology did not relax. They made best use of the past two lockdowns and other days to make the projects a reality in phases," Mr. Pruthviraj, who is also the Assistant Professor at the Department of Water Resources and Ocean Engineering at the institute, said.

The alumni of 1970, 1972 and 1981 have contributed major share for the projects. The setting up of the charging station having five charging units, research and development, design, materials and the rolling out of 11 vehicles has cost about ₹ 50 lakh.

In addition, Mr. Pruthviraj said that the institute will roll out 20 more e-cycles, an automatic e-trolley and an e-bike for the use of National Cadet Corps (NCC) unit at an estimated cost of ₹15 lakhs, borne by the 1972 alumni batch, in the coming days.

"The CSD team, headed by K.V. Gangadharan, a Professor of Mechanical Engineering, comprises 37 members, from different disciplines of science and technology, of whom 11 members exclusively work on designing and developing e-vehicles," he said.

A.S. Karanth, an alumnus of 1970 batch who is the lead co-ordinator of the batch for setting up the charging station at a cost of about ₹20 lakh, said: "Our aim is to see that the campus became carbon neutral. The charging station is the need of the campus to achieve it. Vehicles need the feed to run. The charging station provides discipline in charging and helps in collecting the data in addition to motivating all to use e-vehicles."

Research and development of e-vehicles provided a great on-hand experience to students during their study, Mr. Karanth, an expert on wind energy, said.

Hijab, *azaan*, and halal issues resolved amicably, says CM

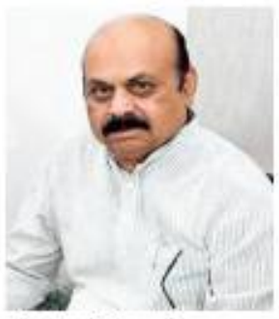
'Action has been taken in accordance with SC and HC orders'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Stating that the issues like *azaan*, hijab, and halal meat had been resolved legally and cordially, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said that providing an efficient and pro-people government was more important.

"Issues like *azaan*, hijab and halal, which had raised concern, have been resolved legally and cordially. Action has been taken in accordance with Supreme Court and High Court orders. The issues have been tackled efficiently. Giving efficient and pro-people administration is important," the Chief Minister told presspersons in Hubballi in reaction to the Opposition's attack on his style of governance.

On the issue of ministerial expansion, Mr. Bommai said that it will be carried out as per the instructions of the party top brass. "After the Supreme Court order on reservation in local bodies, the party is busy preparing for the Legislative Council and Rajya Sabha polls. We had the BJP State Core Committee meeting yesterday. I will contact the party top brass over telephone tomorrow or the day after. The process on Cabinet expansion would happen according to their instructions," he added.



Basavaraj Bommai

On the reports that B.Y. Vijayendra, son of former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, would be given party ticket in the ensuing elections to vacant seats in Legislative Council and later inducted into the Cabinet, the Chief Minister said: "It is all left to the party's top leadership."

Watchtower

Later, at a function organised to inaugurate the renovated Dharavathi Hanuman temple, the Chief Minister said that the State government has decided to build a watchtower atop the historic Anjanadri hill, near Hampi. "Lord Hanuman was born in Karnataka and is a proud son of Karnataka. We have provided a grant of ₹100 crore in the Budget for a comprehensive development of Anjanadri hill. All amenities including a ropeway to reach the hill top and other facilities will be provided to tourists," Mr. Bommai said.

He said that while a grand temple is being built for Lord Sriram in Ayodhya, Anjaneya temple is being developed here.

Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi was also present.

IN BRIEF

A.P. police step up vigil on ambulance services

CHITTOOR

The Andhra Pradesh police have stepped up surveillance on the operation of private ambulances in the Kuppam Assembly constituency which borders Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, in the wake of incidents of carrying of bodies on motorcycles by the kin of deceased owing to non-availability of ambulance services in Tirupati district. Many have complained that private ambulances are charging exorbitantly for shifting patients.

Wishes pour in for DKS on his birthday

BENGALURU

Several prominent leaders, including AICC president Sonia Gandhi, former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai greeted KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar as he turned 60 on Sunday. Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi and veteran BJP leader B.S. Yediyurappa too greeted him. While Ms. Priyanka was present when a cake was cut at the Congress' Chintan Shivir in Udaipur, Mr. Gowda, Mr. Bommai and Mr. Yediyurappa called him over telephone to greet him.

T.N. is power-surplus now, says Minister

COIMBATORE

Tamil Nadu has become power-surplus, and is exporting power to other States, Minister for Electricity, Prohibition and Excise V. Senthilbalaj said on Sunday. Speaking at a DMK workshop on the Dravidian model here, he said, "The power disruption occurred in Tamil Nadu only for two or three days. This was because of the problems in power transmitted to the State by the Central government. The situation has been rectified."

Cash registers ringing again for Mollywood

Nod for 100% occupancy since February-end is reviving fortunes of COVID-hit film industry

G. KRISHNAKUMAR
KOCHI

Good times appear to be back for the Malayalam film industry after it had hit rough weather following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The revival of fortunes occurred after the Kerala government permitted 100% occupancy from February-end onwards. As per the estimates of the Film Exhibitors' United Organisation of Kerala (FEUOK), Amal Neerad's *Bheeshma Parvam*, Di-

Cheers and claps: A marquee crowd at a cinema in Kottayam. • FILE PHOTO

SPECIAL

jo Jose Antony's *Jana Gana Mana*, and K. Madhu's *CBI 5: The Brain* have set the cash registers ringing at the box office.

"The crowds and cheers have returned to the cinema theatres. Actor Mammootty's *Bheeshma Parvam* had a gross collection of around ₹60 crore to ₹65 crore in Kerala alone. Prithviraj's *Jana Gana Mana* is going strong, with a gross collection of ₹30 crore in the State so far, while *CBI 5: The Brain* has earned a State gross collection of ₹20 crore," said K. Vijayakumar, president, FEUOK.

The box-office run is not limited to Malayalam movies as distributors of films in other languages dubbed into Malayalam are also laughing all the way to the bank. M. Renjith, president of the Kerala Film Producers Association (KFPA), pointed out that Prashanth Neel's Yash-starrer *KGF: Chapter 2* has already earned a distributor share of about ₹25 crore from cinema theatres across the Kerala. The post-pandemic situation seems favourable for all the stakeholders in the industry," he said.

On the renewed momentum on the production front, Mr. Renjith said an average 20 to 25 new movies are being registered with the Kerala Film Producers Association every month. "Moreover, there is a steady line up of new releases scheduled for theatre release. The yearly average count of films releasing in Malayalam is around 200. People still consider watching movies in cinema halls as perhaps the cheapest form of entertainment even amidst the rising inflation," he said.

Direct premiere

Trade bodies claimed that there has been a drop in the digital-first release of Malayalam movies compared to the pandemic times. G. Sureshkumar, president of the Kerala Film Chamber of Commerce, said that the majority of the producers is opting for theatrical releases instead of direct premiere on OTT platforms.

Ahead of monsoon, storage level comfortable in reservoirs

KRS water level is hovering around 100 ft

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSURU

For the first time in the last 14 years, the water level in Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) reservoir across the Cauvery in Mandya district was hovering above 100 ft. in May that is usually considered to be peak summer.

The water level as on Sunday was 100.02 ft. as against 87.75 ft. during the same time last year against the full reservoir level of 124.80 ft. In 2020 the water level was at 96.16 ft.

Officials in the KRS said the last time the reservoir had over 100 ft. of water during peak summer was in May 2008 when it was hovering at 105 ft. Ahead of the south west monsoon slated to arrive in late May or early June, the cumulative storage levels in the major reservoirs of the Cauvery basin are comfortable, according to officials.

The combined storage capacity of the KRS, Hemavathi, Harangi and Kabini was 114.57 thousand million cubic (tmc) ft against which the present storage was 56.33 tmc ft., amounting to nearly 50% of the installed capacity. The cumulative storage in the four reservoirs during the same period last year was 36.44 tmc ft.

While KRS' with a gross storage capacity of 49.45 tmc ft., has 22.82 tmc ft. of water as against 15.76 tmc ft. of water that was available last year, Hemavathi with a gross storage is 37.10 tmc ft., has 20.56 tmc ft. of water as against 11.21 tmc ft. during the same period last year.

The other two reservoirs are Harangi which had 5.42 tmc ft. of water while Kabini has 7.53 tmc ft. of water as on Sunday.

The authorities said with the south west monsoon slated to arrive early this year as forecast by the Indian Meteorological Department, the inflow to the reservoirs may start early. If the monsoon is normal for the year, then the outflow from the reservoirs could commence early.

BJP is forcing country into debt-trap, says KTR

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

K.T. Rama Rao, working president of the TRS, has hit back at Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who made caustic remarks against the State government during his visit on Saturday, and made it clear that the steering of the government was very much in the hands of TRS.

"The BJP government at the Centre has been misusing the constitutional bodies to victimise political opponents but it won't go on for long as the democracy (people) in the country is wise enough," he said.

Reacting to Mr. Shah's comments that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao had forced Telangana into a debt trap, he, who is also the Minister for IT, Industries and Urban Development, said the borrowings of Telangana were very much in the limits prescribed by the regulations such as Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act. The country's debt was ₹56,69,428 crore in 2014, but it was set to cross ₹100 lakh crore by March next, he said and sought to know as to who had forced the country into the debt trap.

Corruption charges

On the charges of corruption made by Mr. Shah, Mr. Rao reminded the former that it was a BJP MLA who had stated recently that the Karnataka CM's post was tagged with a ₹2,500-crore price and the party leadership had not taken action against him.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY

TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places likely over Meghalaya, Kerala; heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places likely over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Sikkim and and heavy rainfall at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Karnataka, Lakshadweep and Tamil Nadu.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.1	34.4	27.7	Kozhikode	35.0	28.0	24.8
Ahmedabad	–	43.3	28.0	Kurnool	–	37.5	27.2
Aizawl	–	27.2	24.4	Lucknow	–	43.0	28.2
Allahabad	–	46.4	28.4	Madurai	21.0	39.5	26.0
Bengaluru	21.0	29.7	20.9	Mangaluru	0.2	32.0	25.3
Bhopal	–	44.4	29.4	Mumbai	–	33.6	27.5
Bhubaneswar	–	35.5	27.2	Mysuru	6.0	30.4	20.1
Chandigarh	–	43.6	27.2	New Delhi	–	45.4	23.8
Chennai	0.5	37.8	27.0	Patna	–	37.6	25.4
Coimbatore	0.2	31.9	23.8	Port Blair	8.0	31.2	24.8
Dehradun	–	37.5	22.8	Puducherry	0.3	36.2	26.4
Gangtok	–	20.8	16.7	Pune	–	37.9	23.4
Goa	–	33.0	26.4	Raipur	–	41.8	29.0
Guwahati	16.0	29.5	24.0	Ranchi	2.0	38.6	24.2
Hubballi	–	34.0	23.0	Shillong	41.0	22.9	15.0
Hyderabad	–	40.2	26.6	Shimla	–	–	20.4
Imphal	17.0	23.8	19.8	Srinagar	–	31.0	12.1
Jaipur	–	45.6	33.1	Thiruvananthapuram	106.0	31.1	23.3
Kochi	150.0	–	23.4	Tiruchi	–	38.1	27.0
Kohima	18.0	22.5	14.4	Vijayawada	–	38.6	28.0
Kolkata	24.0	33.8	24.2	Visakhapatnam	–	34.2	29.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing — **Yesterday**

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	20	49	22	69	139	
Bengaluru	7	–	17	49	94	
Chennai	62	–	120	–	47	
Delhi	39	70	16	231	382	
Hyderabad	18	27	–	65	111	
Kolkata	8	23	12	31	44	
Lucknow	8	73	62	176	141	
Mumbai	–	–	84	279	205	
Pune	30	48	114	163	100	

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhiwadi, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 311 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 29

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

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Reimagining the MBA curriculum can help equip women with the right tools for career growth and success

ANURADHA DAS MATHUR

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India faces a strange paradox. On one hand, a greater number of women enroll in higher education each year. On the other, women continue to drop out of the workforce. In the corporate world, management skills are considered important for sustained career growth and success. However, the track record for women, even from the top MBA schools in India, is poor. While many graduate and start on a par with their male classmates, they are less likely to enter the workforce, and more likely to drop out.

Research has shown that the average MBA classroom curriculum is inadequate to prepare women for the world of work. Management schools treat men and women in the same way, assuming that they will emerge from their colleges and face the same environment. Sadly, this isn't true. The analogy that explains this the best is that of a golf academy that encourages everyone to apply but provides only right-handed clubs to its members. Clearly, the left-handed students graduate with a disadvantage and never perform to their potential. Similarly, women enter workplaces largely designed by and for men, without the skills they need to navigate their unique situation.

Facing biases

Society, homes and workplaces present a very different set of factors to men and women, be it expectations around behaviour, ambition, or traits that determine workplace success. Stereotypes like aggressive versus assertive, supportive vs soft, frivolous vs fun are now well documented, among other biases that women face at the workplace.

To correct this, organisations sponsor women professionals in women-only executive education programmes. The curriculum is surprisingly similar across the globe, focused on strengthening traits that are under-developed because of years of gendered conditioning – confidence, assertiveness, negotiation skills, networking, executive presence, dealing with guilt, difficult conversations, resolving conflict and achieving balance.

Course correction

The question to ask is: why aren't we equipping our young women with these competencies right at the beginning so that they navigate their domestic and professional environments with more ease? Why must they hit a wall before we correct for prejudices?

Another question is that of access. Wherever there are limited seats, women are at a disadvantage. According to the Association of MBAs, only 19% of students who applied for and enrolled in Indian business schools are women – the lowest ratio in the world. Part of it is self-selection: they opt out based on evidence of how women fare in the corporate world. The high-quality MBA space is extremely competitive and women, based on generational experience, decide not to join the 'rat race'. Unfortunately, this means that they miss out on career growth since managerial skills are highly recommended for the traditional success toolkit. How can we make access to high-quality management education easier for young women?

Women need role models to show that success is well within their reach. A 2016 analysis of case studies at top business schools globally shows that only 8% have female protagonists, sending a clear signal to students about what leadership looks like. Exposure to female role models can significantly influence women's ambitions and performance.

Such exposure can also teach women how to leverage the strengths of values such as collaboration, empathy, lateral thinking, self-aware leadership, and listening, which don't yet find a place in standard MBA curricula but are becoming increasingly important to lead in a complex and uncertain world. A reimagined MBA can incorporate all of these requirements to prepare women for their professional journey.

Most importantly, we need MBA programmes that prompt women to think of work as a 'must-have' as opposed to a 'nice-to-have'. While it will take time to create a level playing field, we can accelerate the process by equipping women with the right tools.

The writer is Founder and Dean, The Vedica Scholars Programme for Women.

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Change of guard

The BJP's course correction in Tripura is evidence of attempts to widen leadership pool

In an abrupt move few had anticipated, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) replaced Biplab Kumar Deb with Manik Saha as Chief Minister of Tripura, a northeastern State that the party had wrested from the Left in 2018. Mr. Saha's rise in the BJP that he joined in 2016 after quitting the Congress has been dramatic, and he largely owes it to Mr. Deb. The outgoing CM threw his weight behind Mr. Saha, who had succeeded him as president of the BJP State unit also. Public disapproval and rebellion within the BJP cornered Mr. Deb, and he was forced to make way for Mr. Saha. Mr. Saha inherits at least a part of his predecessor's baggage. A couple of BJP MLAs have publicly expressed their unhappiness with the choice. Until he puts the party house in order quickly, establishes his credentials independent of Mr. Deb, and improves public perception about the State government, the new CM will remain on tenterhooks. In Uttarakhand, the BJP changed the CM thrice ahead of the Assembly elections earlier this year. The Tripura Assembly elections are nine months away, and the change of guard indicates the party's assessment that course correction was required. Mr. Deb is the sixth Chief Minister to be replaced by the BJP in recent times, following Sarbananda Sonowal in Assam, B.S. Yediyurappa in Karnataka, Trivendra Singh Rawat and Tirath Singh Rawat in Uttarakhand in quick succession, and Vijay Rupani in Gujarat.

The BJP takes all elections very seriously, but Tripura is special. The State was a bastion of the Left Front for decades until the BJP won the last Assembly election, signifying a unique ideological victory. Since then, the party has been wobbling; two sitting MLAs, Sudip Roy Barman and Ashish Kumar Saha, left the party in February to join the Congress, potentially indicating a new churning. A defeat next year could have ripple effects in other States, particularly in the northeast, and the party wants to avoid that at any cost. That said, the elevation of Mr. Saha, who has not risen through the Sangh Parivar ranks, suggests the BJP is also changing as it grows. True, there is no let-up in its Hindutva rhetoric, but it has perhaps become more opportunistic in using leaders from other ideological stables. Mr. Saha is the fourth person to become a BJP CM in a northeastern State, after crossing over from the Congress. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, one of them, is an influential actor in the BJP's scheme of things now. The BJP continues to draft leaders from other parties in leadership positions across the country. Ideological agnosticism is nothing to be admired but it would be good if such crossovers lead to a less polarised polity. There is no evidence of any such trend, but Tripura could be a start.

Fuel to fire

The focus must be on Russia ending the war and not on expanding NATO

Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24 apparently to stop NATO's further expansion into its neighbourhood. But in less than three months, the same invasion has pushed two countries in that neighbourhood to consider NATO membership. Last week, the Prime Minister and President of Finland, which has stayed neutral since the end of the Second World War, said they hoped their country would apply for NATO membership "without delay". Sweden, which has stayed out of military alliances for 200 years, stated that NATO membership would strengthen its national security and stability in the Baltic and Nordic regions. If these two countries now formally apply for membership, it would be the biggest strategic setback for Russian President Vladimir Putin whose most important foreign policy focus has been on weakening NATO. Particularly alarming for Russia is the case of Finland, with which it has a hostile past. Stalin invaded Finland in 1939 demanding more territories. Though the Red Army struggled in the initial phase of the war, it forced Finland to sign the Moscow Peace Treaty, ceding some 9% of its territory. But a year later, the Finns, in an alliance with the German Nazis, attacked the Soviet troops. Peace was established along the 1,340-km Finnish-Russian border after the Nazis were defeated in the Second World War. Now, Ukraine appears to have deepened the security concerns of Finland and Sweden.

It is still not clear whether these countries would be inducted into NATO any time soon. Within the alliance, decisions are taken unanimously. Turkey has already expressed its opposition to taking the Nordic countries in. While the U.S. and the U.K. are pushing for NATO's expansion, Germany and France have taken a more cautious line. Hungary, which has deep ties with Russia and has already held up the EU's plan to ban Russian oil imports, has not made its views clear. But the mere declaration of intent by Finland and Sweden to join NATO has sent tensions in Europe soaring, with Russia threatening 'military and technical' retaliation. Normatively speaking, Finland and Sweden are sovereign countries and free to take decisions on joining any alliance. It is up to NATO to decide whether they should be taken in or not. But a bigger question these countries as well as Europe as a whole face is whether another round of expansion of NATO would help bring in peace and stability in Europe, particularly at a time when the continent is facing a pre-First World War-type security competition. It would escalate the current crisis between nuclear-armed Russia and NATO to dangerous levels. Already the several rounds of NATO expansion and Russia's territorial aggression have brought the world to its most dangerous moment since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Russia should immediately halt the war and all the stakeholders should focus on finding a long-term solution to the crisis.

In abeyance of Section 124A, a provisional relief

However, there could be a negation if governments are allowed to replicate their use of sedition through other statutes

SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

In a brief order delivered in *S.G. Vombatkere vs Union of India*, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India effectively suspended the operation of Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code. The provision, which criminalises sedition, has been used by successive regimes, including by governments post-Independence, to suppress democratic dissent. Previously, during oral hearings, the Bench, presided by the Chief Justice of India, Justice N.V. Ramana, had indicated that it was of the view that the law was an anachronism, a colonial-era relic. Now, through an order on May 11, the Court has directed governments, both at the level of the Union and the States, to keep "all pending trials, appeals and proceedings" arising out of a charge framed under Section 124A "in abeyance".

Basis of reconsideration

This direction was issued after the Union government filed an affidavit informing the Court that it had decided to re-examine the law. The deposition, by itself, offered no firm commitment on whether the Government would, in fact, recommend to Parliament a complete removal of Section 124A. But the Bench believed that the offer to reconsider the provision, if nothing else, showed that the Government was in broad agreement with the Court's *prima facie* opinion on the matter, that the clause as it stands "is not in tune with the current social milieu, and was intended for a time when this country was under the colonial regime".

Nestled inside a chapter in the penal code dealing with "Offences against the State", Section 124A defines sedition as any action – "whether by words, signs, or visible representation" – which "brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law in India". The word "disaffection", the provision explains, "includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity". The section carries with it the prospect of life in prison. What is more, right from its inception, the offence has been treated as non-bailable. This means that a person arrested without trial has no inherent right to bail. He or she must apply to a judge to seek release.

Munshi amendment ignored

As is only too evident, the law was always meant to be used as a restraint on dissent, to crush any and every form of opposition aimed at the government. Indeed, it was by pointing to these repressive features and to the trials of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mohandas Gandhi that K.M. Munshi argued so forcefully in the Constituent Assembly to delete the use of the "equivocal" word "sedition" as a permitted restriction on free speech. Should the word not be deleted from the Draft Constitution, Munshi said, an "erroneous impression would be created that we want to perpetuate 124-A of the I.P.C".

Munshi's amendment sailed through. The adopted Constitution did not permit a restriction on free speech on the grounds of sedition. But despite this, governments across India continued to charge people with the offence. In the 1950s, two different High Courts struck down Section 124A as offensive to freedom. But, in 1962, in *Kedar Nath Singh vs State of Bihar*, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court reversed these verdicts. The Court paid no heed to

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the debates that informed the Constituent Assembly. Instead, it found that Section 124A was defensible as a valid restriction on free speech on grounds of public order. However, while upholding the clause, the Court limited its application to "acts involving intention or tendency to create disorder, or disturbance of law and order, or incitement to violence".

Quite apart from the limitations that it read in – which are by themselves ill-defined – the decision ignored the otherwise wide amplitude of the words used in Section 124A. It failed to recognise that terms such as "disaffection towards the government", which are fundamentally vague, ought to have no place in a penal statute, and that, all along, the intention behind criminalising sedition was to quell the right to dissent. A supposed circumscription of the ambit of the offence was, therefore, never going to be effective.

Marginalised most affected

Since then, in its application by law enforcement – and indeed by judges hearing petitions for bail – the limitations imposed in *Kedar Nath Singh* have rarely been observed. And in recent years, we have seen an enhanced exploitation of the law, where even the most benign acts of opposition have been met with a charge of sedition. As is often the case with abuses of this kind, it is the most marginalised sections of society that have faced the brunt of the harm.

An altered landscape

It is no doubt true that a law cannot be invalidated merely because it has been subject to misuse. But in the case of sedition, the rationale for the decision in *Kedar Nath Singh* and the survival of Section 124A have both become untenable with time. Since 1962, when the judgment was handed out, the Supreme Court's reading of fundamental rights has undergone a transformative change. For instance, the Court has, in recent times, struck down penal laws on grounds, among other things, of imprecision in their language, and of the chilling effect that the restrictions have on free speech. Moreover, since 1973, sedition has also been treated as a cognisable offence; that is, the police can arrest persons suspected of having committed the offence without a warrant.

The altered landscape meant that when fresh challenges were mounted against Section 124A, the time to reconsider *Kedar Nath Singh* had clearly arrived. This reconsideration could have been done in different ways. The Court could have constituted a Bench of five judges to take a formal call on whether the judgment required express overruling. Alternatively, the Court could have treated its earlier verdict as a ruling rendered *per incuriam*; that is, as a decision that was rendered in ignorance of binding precedent and law.

How then, one might ask, could the Court have granted a temporary suspension of the provision? This the Bench did based on the Union government's affidavit indicating a willingness to re-examine Section 124A. The affidavit allowed the judges to temporarily halt their exercise of judicial review and to issue instead an interim order of the present kind: where the provision will be kept in abeyance until the Government, and Parliament, take a final call on the matter. To be sure, the Government has offered no plain pledge on what it might eventually choose to do. This only means that should the state choose to retain the law the Court can still step in.

In the long run, the decision in *Kedar Nath Singh* will require a clear disavowal. But in nullifying Section 124A, albeit for the present, the Court has provided provisional relief – allowing those accused of the offence to both seek bail in terms of the order, and to have their trials frozen.

"The essence of democracy," as Munshi put it in the Constituent Assembly "is criticism of government." The sedition law disregards this core spirit. It criminalises censure and opposition and it enervates, to the point of exhaustion, the basic structure of a democratic republic.

What the laws must have

If we have indeed seen the back of Section 124A we must see it as a success for freedom. But this result will be meaningless if our governments are allowed to replicate their use of sedition through the invocation of other statutes, on equally baseless grounds – various preventive detention laws and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, among others, have been repeatedly deployed as a means not merely to protect the country's security but also to crack down on genuine acts of peaceful dissent and opposition. To protect our democracy, we must ensure that the constitutional guarantees to personal liberty and freedom do not go in vain. For that, each of our penal laws must be animated by a concern for equality, justice, and fairness.

Suhrith Parthasarathy is an advocate practising in the Madras High Court

This Delhi High Court split verdict needs to be resolved

The line of reasoning on the marital rape exception and protection of the institution of marriage is problematic

SHRADDHA CHAUDHARY

A division Bench of the Delhi High Court recently delivered a split verdict on whether exception two to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, i.e., marital rape exception, is unconstitutional. This exception states that sexual acts by a man with his adult wife are not rape.

The two judgments discuss several important issues in coming to their diametrically opposed decisions. Due to space constraints, I will focus on the analyses in both opinions of the constitutionality of the exception in terms of Article 14 of the Constitution of India (right to equality before the law and equal protection of laws). This right does not absolutely preclude differential treatment of two classes of persons. It seeks only to ensure, simply speaking, that like classes are treated alike.

One of the tests under Article 14 is that of reasonable classification, which has two prongs. First, where two classes of persons (say adults and children) are treated differently, it must be established that they are indeed distinguishable from each other. This is the condition of intelligible differentia. Second, there should be a rational nexus, or logical relationship, between a law which treats the two classes differently (say, by prohibiting children from performing dangerous labour) and the object or purpose of the law (the protection of children).

The intelligible differentia

In this case, the intelligible differentia of marital rape exception is, by agreement, between married and unmarried women. Per Justice Rajiv Shakdher, marital rape exception fails the second condition. The object of the law, he concludes, is to punish certain sexual acts when done without consent. In this view, what defines the wrong of rape is its harmful nature and the lack of consent. To this object, he finds marriage irrelevant. For him, a woman who faces non-consensual sexual acts has been raped, regardless of her relationship with the perpetrator. Since there is no rational nexus between the differentia (married and unmarried women) and the object of the law (punishing non-consensual sexual acts), marital rape exception fails the test of reasonable classification and must be struck down as unconstitutional.

The learned judge rightly observes, furthermore, that in applying this classification test, courts must not lose sight of the substance of Article 14, which is equal protection of laws. In going through the motions of the test, therefore, courts should not validate inequality or discrimination.

Per Justice C. Hari Shankar, though the object of the main provision is, indeed, to punish acts of rape, the object of marital rape exception is to keep the 'taint' of the allegation of rape outside the marital sphere, and thereby protect the institution of marriage. In light of this object, he concludes, the differential treatment of married and unmarried women is not unconstitutional. However, no reasons are given as to why, if marital rape is recognised, the institution of marriage would be threatened. The experiences of countries where the offence is recognised give no evidence of a weakening or destruction of marriage or, more importantly, a causation between the ability of wives to prosecute their husbands for rape and the weakening or destruction of marriage. How, then, is the nexus rational?

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Circular line of reasoning

Moreover, according to this opinion, all non-consensual sex cannot be considered rape because the marital rape exception takes sexual acts within marriage outside the purview of the offence and label of 'rape'. Marriage, within which there is a 'legitimate' expectation of sex, materially changes the nature of the act in this view, although the opinion does not explain why it is 'legitimate expectation' and not consent which ought to determine the nature of sex in marriage. Surely, as the honourable judge himself affirms, there can be no legitimate expectation of forced sex. Though he agrees that women's sexual autonomy deserves respect, and any legitimate expectation of sex within marriage ends where her rights to sexual autonomy and bodily integrity begin, he does not think that this means that non-consensual or forced sex within marriage ought to be rape.

This is a circular and inconsistent line of reasoning. The existence of the exception itself upholds the reasonableness and constitutionality of the exception. Consider, if murder was legally defined as intentional killing, and an exception stated that no intentional killing on Mondays would be murder. Would it not be circular, when examining the reasonableness of this exception, to say that it is perfectly valid on the ground that the exception itself removes a class of intentional killings from the ambit of the offence of murder and, therefore, these intentional killings cannot be equated with other intentional killings? Likewise, autonomy (meaning self-governance) is axiomatically antithetical to force. If I can be forced or otherwise compelled to do what is against my will or without my consent by another, my right to self-govern is extinguished. Marriage has nothing to do with this.

A negation of autonomy

On such a line of reasoning, the honourable judge makes a seriously problematic assertion: that rape by a stranger is worse than rape by a husband. The assertion flattens the diversity of experiences of rape survivors without an iota of evidence in its support. Non-consensual or forced sex within marriage may be culturally normalised and legally validated, but there is no forgone conclusion that marriage makes the experience of 'non-consensual/forced sexual acts' less wrong or harmful. In fact, forced sexual acts by a person who is meant to love you and who has constant access to your body because of the proximity of marriage, can be worse. The physical violation can be aggravated by breach of trust, fear of continuing violation of bodily integrity and the perversity of being in an intimate relationship with a person who wilfully negates your sexual autonomy.

The consequence of this split verdict is a legal stalemate. We can only hope now, that the matter will be resolved by the Supreme Court of India, or preferably by Parliament itself.

Shraddha Chaudhary is a PhD Student at the Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge and Lecturer, Jindal Global Law University, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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No wheat export

The knee-jerk reaction of the Government of India in banning the export of wheat grains with immediate effect, also under the pretext of "controlling the sudden rise in the price of wheat and *atta* in India", is bemusing (Page 1, May 15).

Just a few days ago, the Government was in full cry about picking up the slack amid the Russia-Ukraine war as wheat supply is being disrupted across the globe. There are two takeaways: first, if it is indeed serious enough to taper overall inflation, who is stopping it from cutting excise duties on petroleum products? Second, the farm laws were enacted for the interests of farmers, enabling them to sell their produce on the prices guided by market forces, but this move is at odds with the letter and spirit of the rescinded farm laws. It also appears as if Centre is nursing grudges against the farmer community and taking measures of depriving them of a windfall on account of high wheat prices.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

■ So, it is clear now that this also involves high prices of food items. With a lot of uncertainty in the Indian and world economy due to rising inflation, it is time the Government takes measures to help the middle class by amending tax rates.

VINAYAKA M.,
Bengaluru

The Ukraine war

The Editorial ("Relentless war", May 10) mentions Russian President Vladmir Putin expecting a quick victory, but he is just following a soft approach. History will show that in February 1945, Soviet troops stopped at Kienitz, 70 kilometres from Berlin – in order not to repeat our debacle in Warsaw in August 1920 – to successfully take the German capital just months later, in May.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict is 'small fry' when compared to the Russian President's demand that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization withdraw its forces to positions they occupied in 1997. There is still much weaponry on the Russian side in the form of nuclear sea drones and hypersonic missiles. NATO needs to consider the Russian President's stand.

MERGEN MONGUSH,
Moscow, Russia

'Chintan Shivir'

The Congress may have taken a tiny step towards an organisational overhaul, but will the party ever become daring enough to stop bending backwards to keep the Gandhi family in good humour? Or will the Gandhis, in turn, show 'magnanimity' to tell the party that they do not want any more special exemptions hereafter? Is it too much to ask how many '*Nav Sankalp chintan shivirs*' the party needs to gain independence from the Gandhis/dynasty?

C.G. KURIAKOSE,
Malippara, Kothamangalam, Kerala

Notes on politics

I am 1939 born and have seen the Independence movement, the reaction of many after the release of the Indian Constitution, the rise and the fall of many a party at the Centre and in every State in India. One does not need to be an expert to analyse the blunders committed by several parties. For the Indian National Congress, the real issue is about corruption and the party persisting with the Gandhis even though there are excellent 'non-family' leaders who can run the show with ease and competence. Finding fault with the Prime Minister carries no weight.

There are no saints in the Bharatiya Janata Party either. The politics in Karnataka is one such example. Finally, if any party is to progress and perform, it has to get rid of the bad elements within; 50% of the battle is won this way.

SHESHADRI IYENGAR,
Visakhapatnam

The importance of Lumbini

Modi's visit is political and strategic and is an opportune time for India to do much more in the region

RANJIT RAE

Pilgrims meditate at the wall below the nativity scene in the Maya Devi Temple in Lumbini, Nepal. ▪AFP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Lumbini, Nepal, though only for a few hours, is full of symbolism and substance. No Indian Prime Minister has visited Lumbini in the last few decades. Mr. Modi's visit is a combination of personal desire and political and strategic goals. For him, it is the fulfilment of a wish articulated in 2014 when he first became Prime Minister. Since he could not travel to Lumbini during his previous visits to Nepal, as Ambassador, I planted, on his behalf, a sapling of the sacred Bodhi tree in the gardens of the Maya Devi temple where Gautama Buddha was born.

Amid the strife and turmoil and the anger and hatred that we see in society, the Prime Minister's visit also provides a moment for quiet reflection and a reiteration of the message of peace, compassion and non-violence preached by the Buddha and spread by the roaring lions in the four directions, as depicted in the Lion Capital of Ashoka, our national emblem – a message that calls for shunning extremes in ideology and thought and following the middle path forged through tolerance, dialogue and debate, and reconciliation and consensus.

The birthplace of the Buddha

The visit is political, since it will, hopefully, put to rest the unnecessary debate on whether the Buddha was born in Nepal, which, for Nepal, is a sensitive issue. Any assertion to the contrary results in anti-India demonstrations in a country whose national identity is tied to Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha.

It is strategic, in the face of the growing presence of China in Lumbini, which is close to the Indian border; the largest monastery has been built by the Chinese who sponsor and support international conferences on Buddhism in Nepal as well as the massive celebrations on Buddhist festivals such as Vesak. In pre-COVID-19 times, there was a steady flow of Chinese tourists to Lumbini and reports about potential Chinese investments in the region. The Chinese are leaving no stone unturned to exploit the soft power potential of Buddhism, a fast-growing religious tradition that has half-a-billion adherents (largely in East and Southeast Asia). During a visit to Myanmar some years ago, this writer saw huge crowds in the capital city Yangon, which was decked up for the occasion. They were waiting patiently for a glimpse of Buddhist relics from China.

India is home to some of the most sacred sites of Buddhism: the place of Lord Buddha's enlightenment, Bodh Gaya; of his first sermon, Sarnath; and of his Mahaparinirvana, Kushinagar. And this is not counting Shravasti, where the Buddha preached for many years; Nalanda; and Rajgir, among several others. Unfortunately, India remains largely unrepresented in Lumbini, but for a small museum building that was constructed with Indian assistance in the late 1990s. A proposal for a 'sound and light show' remains in limbo.

Lumbini is home to beautiful monasteries from several countries. The first foreign monastery in Lumbini was built by a Vietnamese monk, Thay Huyen Dieu. He subsequently built another one in Bodh Gaya. (In large part, due to his efforts, a visit to Bodh Gaya has become *de rigueur* for every visiting communist politician from Vietnam.) India does not have a monastery in Lumbini. Mr. Modi's visit is an opportune time to remedy the situation and announce migration and other facilities in the area. Of course, now with the construction of airports in Kushinagar (India) as well as Bhairahawa (Nepal) travel would be easier. Speedy construction of the integrated check post would also boost tourism and the local economy.

Developing the Buddhist circuit

While there is a master plan to develop Lumbini, the absence of one is glaring in Bodh Gaya. Bodh Gaya has developed in an unplanned fashion with the secular and the sacred jostling cheek by jowl; it is like any other small town in India - chaotic, dirty and noisy. It is anything but serene. There is an urgent need to adopt a master plan and develop Bodh Gaya as a sacred place for pilgrimage for both Hindus and Buddhists. The relationship between the monasteries of foreign countries in Bodh Gaya and the local communities is fraught. A high-level coordination committee comprising representatives of State and Central governments as well as of foreign monasteries should be set up to resolve problems. The monasteries are headed by monks who are greatly revered in their home countries and should be treated with respect and reverence. Bodh Gaya can also learn from the experience of Lumbini with the establishment of a twinning arrangement between the two towns. Efforts should be made for the entire Buddhist circuit, namely Lumbini-Bodh Gaya-Sarnath-Kushinagar, to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site with master plans for each segment of the circuit.

India can also take the initiative to organise an international conference on the development of the Buddhist circuit; this will give a sense of participation and ownership to Buddhist countries. This could be a joint initiative of India and Nepal. India can also establish an international museum of Buddhist traditions in Bodh Gaya and invite all Buddhist countries to participate.

If we implement some of these suggestions and improve infrastructure in the area, millions of devotees who wish to walk in the footsteps of the Buddha would be forever grateful.

the establishment of an Indian monastery.

There is much else that India can do in Lumbini. More than 50 years ago, United Nations Secretary-General U Thant had set up an international committee for the development of Lumbini. A master plan was developed by the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. Since then, Nepal has been implementing the plan, albeit at a lethargic place. From time to time, Nepalese leaders have talked about reviving the committee to inject more dynamism into the project. India could assist them in this regard.

Both Lumbini and the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya are UNESCO World Heritage sites – they are to Buddhists what Mecca is to Muslims or Kashi is to Hindus, and should be visited at least once in a lifetime. However, the footfalls of Buddhist pilgrims remain low. For years there has been talk about developing a Buddhist circuit with seamless connectivity and comfortable travel between the major pilgrimage sites in Nepal and India. Unfortunately, talk has not fully translated into action. Though the roads network on the Indian side is much better today, the link roads connecting Nepal with the Indian highway system need to be upgraded. It is a nightmare to cross the Sunauli-Bhairahawa India-Nepal check post along the Uttar Pradesh-Nepal border that is designated for tourists. Perhaps travel by road, rather than helicopter, would give the Prime Minister an idea of the poor state of border infrastructure and im-

Ranjit Rae is the author of 'Kathmandu Dilemma: Resetting India-Nepal Ties' and a former Ambassador to Nepal

The road to safety

The onus for disciplining traffic on roads lies as much on citizens as it does on the government

ASHISH KUNDRA

Road safety is an issue of universal concern. All of us are road users. Yet, it barely captures our attention, except when it involves a celebrity hit-and-run case. The statistics are startling. Every year, mega Indian cities witness nearly 50,000 accidents. A quarter of them are fatal. More than half of these are on account of over speeding and a quarter due to dangerous driving. Nearly half of those who lose their lives are pedestrians. Almost half of these avoidable deaths are due to collisions with buses and trucks. The burden of death is borne by the young. The opportunity cost of lost human lives is immense.

Lessons from trials

In the case of New Delhi, road deaths peaked in 2009. Since then, they have gradually tapered despite burgeoning numbers of vehicles. This improvement came on the back of commendable interventions by the Delhi Police on black spots, traffic calming measures, and enhanced enforcement. The Delhi government has now initiated a drive to enforce lane discipline, starting with strict compliance on the bus lane. This required a reorientation in approach by all road users. Buses, like big bullies, hitherto had a free run. Now, deviations from the lane invite harsh penalties. Trials over the last one month have thrown up several lessons.

First, it would be useful to look at the skill sets of Indian drivers. A learner's license, issued after a test on a basic understanding of road signages and traffic rules, is the first requirement. A driving skill test confirms the ability of the driver to wield the wheel. A sense of entitlement, especially among the elite, makes them look for shortcuts. Going to a test track is considered infra dig. A word with a friendly official helps, or in some cases the unscrupulous tout swings into action. Delhi now has automated driving test centres, which have reduced the margin of human intervention. Consequentially, failure rates (about 40%) are far higher than other cities. Even so, a mere skill test doesn't equip a person with driving etiquette – sticking to the lane; signalling while turning; maintaining speed and traffic signals; and respecting the rights of pedestrians, overtaking norms and parking rules. The gap between a lab environment test and reality leaves much to be desired. Perhaps an additional step of mandatory simulator tests and psychological evaluation could be embedded in the regulatory framework – more so for drivers of heavy transport vehicles.

The second aspect is the amenability of road design to accommodate all users fairly. Buses must stick to their lanes and stop at designated bus stops. This would require a free passage in the bus lane, which people tend to clutter by parking their vehicles or street vendors use for brisk sales. Auto rickshaws and taxis encroach on the bus shelter, soliciting passengers on their way home. Clearly, our roads need to make spaces for all users – pedestrians/cyclists, buses, other vehicles – and designate pick-up and drop-off points for taxis and auto rickshaws. This entails remodelling our roads with intuitive road designs and signages, which mark out different zones of road usage. A pilot stretch has been redesigned collaboratively with IIT Delhi.

Enforcement of traffic discipline involves multiple agencies – the road-owning agency, the municipal body, the traffic police and the transport enforcement wing. Most drivers stick to the lane, unless forced by impediments, given the deterrence of heavy penalties. Private vehicle users also need to abide by these rules. Similarly, speeding cameras installed by traffic police in the city, with the automatic number plate recognition system, saw a spike in the number of challans and a slowdown of vehicles in the city. Technology tools and deploying artificial intelligence would introduce necessary deterrence for traffic violations.

Using public transport

The propensity of people to use personal vehicles instead of public transport also adds to the chaos. Some of this is attributable to need for improvement in efficiencies of public transport, but partly on account of personal choices. Delhi has the highest per capita registration of personal vehicles – nearly 110 cars per 1,000 people, as against a national average of 25. At one level, there is a need to introduce Mobility as a Service (MaaS) solutions, which integrate all options of public mobility on a common digital platform. A commuter could then choose to hop onto a bus, metro, a cab or an auto. A government-backed digital aggregator of all mobility options would make public transport more efficient and provide inbuilt solutions for last-mile and first-mile connectivity.

Disciplining traffic on roads is a mammoth exercise in collective behavioural change. The onus of change lies as much on citizens as on the government.

Ashish Kundra is Principal Secretary Transport, Government of Delhi. Views are personal

STATE OF PLAY

Misogyny in the film industry

Implementation of the Hema Commission report could put to an end many unwelcome practices

M.P. PRAVEEN

When an upcoming actor made allegations of rape against producer-actor Vijay Babu last month, he chose to brazen it out by appearing on Facebook Live and naming the woman. The producer and his actions were the latest signs of the larger problem within the Malayalam film industry, which has been in the spotlight for the past few years.

Although there were rumours of sexual exploitation and unequal treatment of women in the industry, it was in 2017, when a popular female actor was allegedly abducted and sexually assaulted, that the name of a major star, Dileep, was taken for the first time in such a context. That case has taken major twists and turns since then, with Dileep now facing accusations of influencing witnesses, erasing digital evidence, and even issuing death threats to the investigating officers.

What is common in both these cases as well as in issues concerning women in the industry is the attitude of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA). While it reluctantly expelled Dileep only after his arrest in July 2017, after initially standing "both with the survivor and the accused", it was quick to reinstate him once he got out on bail. This led to the resignation of the survivor and three other female actors from AMMA, which forced Dileep to resign.

After the allegations against Vijay Babu were raised and he went absconding last month, AMMA maintained silence initially. An executive committee meeting was convened on May 1. A participant at the meeting told *The Hindu* that the organisation's office-bearers never demanded Vijay Babu's resignation; rather, they waited till 8.15 p.m. to get a letter from him in which he expressed his willingness to "temporarily stay away" from the committee until his innocence is proven. AMMA later issued a press release saying that it has "accepted his request". Within two days, three members of the AMMA's Internal Complaints Committee resigned in protest against this.

The Women in Cinema Collective (WCC), formed in the aftermath of the assault case in 2017, has since then been questioning the silence and inaction, as well as raising its voice for equal space for women in the industry. The State government constituted the Justice Hema Commission to study issues of sexual harassment and gender inequality in the industry partly due to their efforts. However, the report submitted by the Commission two and a half years ago still remains under wraps as the government is not keen on making it public. This has led to speculation that big stars from the industry could be named in it. The WCC has demanded its publication after redacting the sensitive parts, but all that the public has seen is a 40-point list of suggestions based on the report that the Culture Department tabled in a meeting with film organisations last week, to discuss its implementation.

Amid all this churn in the industry, there has also been considerable push back against misogyny on screen, which was a staple of mainstream Malayalam cinema until a decade ago. It is not just a coincidence that this period also ushered in a new wave of cinema in Malayalam, which is being hailed everywhere for its novel themes and progressive content. Yet, there still remain vestiges of the old attitudes both on and off screen; men are unwilling to accept that the times are changing.

Implementation of the Hema Commission report in letter and spirit could be the one much-needed nail in the coffin of many unwelcome practices in the industry. We cannot lose sight of the fact that the old guard, including the accused actor, still holds a considerable grip on the production and exhibition side of the industry.

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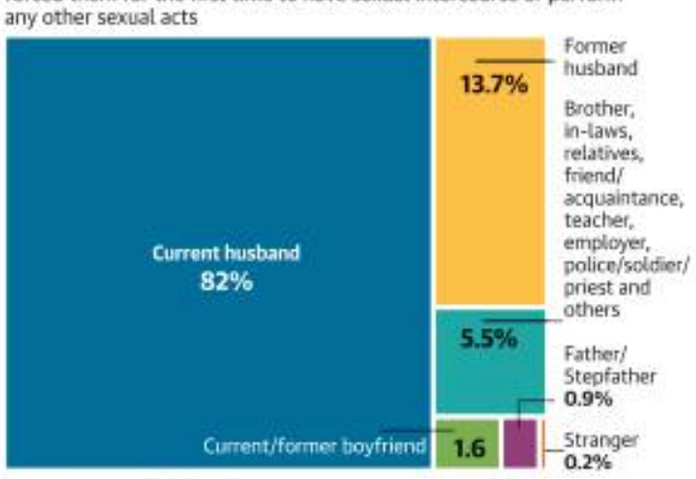
DATA POINT

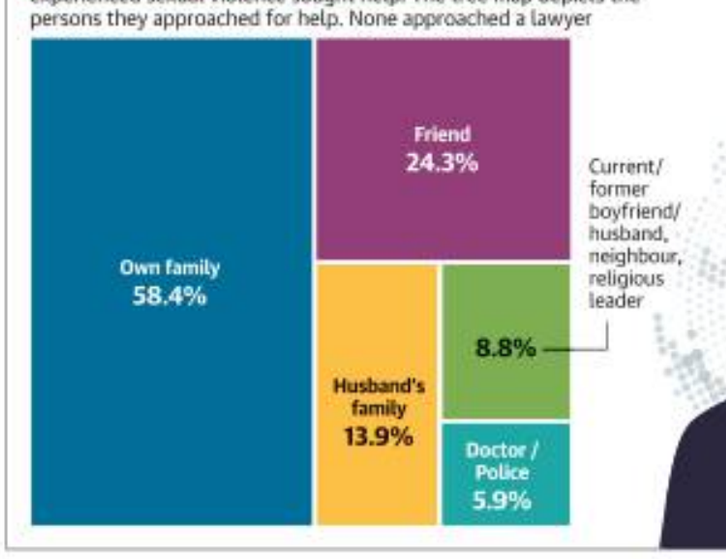
The right to say 'no'

On Wednesday, the Delhi High Court delivered a split verdict on the question of criminalising marital rape. Justice Rajiv Shakdher said that the right to withdraw consent formed the core of the woman's right to life and liberty. Justice C. Hari Shankar disagreed that consent alone mattered and said that marriage is accompanied by obligations that the partners have to bear including conjugal expectations. NFHS-5 (2019-21)* data show that over 95% of married women in India who endured sexual violence identified their husbands/former husbands as the perpetrator. Worryingly, over 90% of those who endured sexual violence did not seek help. Even among those who did, none approached a lawyer to seek legal recourse. More than 70% took help from their's/ husband's family. About 18% of married women said they cannot say 'no' to their husbands if they did not want to have sexual intercourse. About 20% of husbands said they would reprimand their wives for refusing to have sex, while about 13% said they would refuse financial support. Given that only 27% of married women are employed compared to 92% of married men, such threats force women to endure violence. By **Rebecca Rose Varghese** and **Vignesh Radhakrishnan**

❶ Source of crime | The tree map shows the % of married women in India who identified the following individuals as those who forced them for the first time to have sexual intercourse or perform any other sexual acts



❷ Source of help | Only 9.5% of women in India who have experienced sexual violence sought help. The tree map depicts the persons they approached for help. None approached a lawyer



❸ Financial dependence

Only about 27% of married women were employed compared to 92% of married men. Even among women who worked, a majority earned less than men

% employed among currently married women/men aged 15-49

Gender	%
Women	26.6
Men	92

Cash earnings of married women compared to their husband's earnings

	%
More	20.7
Less	53.5
About the same	19.1
Husband has no earning	5.4

❹ Sexual coercion

Over 18% of married women said they cannot refuse their husbands sex. About 20% of men said they would get angry if their wives denied them sex and about 13% each said they would refuse financial support or use force to have sex

% who can say no to their husband if they do not want to have sexual intercourse

Among women with...	%
No schooling	77.5
12 or more years of schooling	87.2
Any or no schooling	82.4

% of men who agree that when a wife refuses to have sex with her husband, he has the right to:

	%
Get angry and reprimand her	19.8
Refuse to give her financial support	13.3
Use force to have sex	12.5

Source: National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21)

The Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 16, 1972

Record drilling in floor of Arabian sea

Boston, May 15: An international team of oceanographic scientists reported on Wednesday experimental drilling on the floor of the Arabian sea penetrated deeper than anywhere in the world – 1,300 metres under the ocean floor. The record depth was at the site in the northwest section of the sea under 3,534 metres of water. The report also disclosed finding an area in the Red Sea of hot brine pools with underlying sediments containing gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc. The expedition discovered a submarine ridge at least 480 km long off the coast of southeast Arabia, and indications that the origin of the Red Sea was more complex than believed previously. The findings were announced at the Museum of Science by officials of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, which participated along with Columbia, University of Miami, University of Washington and the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, La Jolla, California.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 16, 1922

Educational Reform

The following are extracts from the welcome address delivered by the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. R. Swaminatha, at the 14th session of the Madras Provincial Educational Conference held at Kumbakonom yesterday: In the existing schools of all states, the pupils should be taught to value health and manual labour and cultivate healthy independent thinking and a due sense of responsibility and duty by the State on the one side and by their own people on the other. What is really needed is increased attention to hygiene and increased insistence upon some useful form of hand and eye training being adopted in schools. The gymnastic instructors attached to schools must be instructed afresh in the laws of health and the several forms of recreation conducive to health, and given a better and more enlightened conception of their duties and responsibilities as physical directors in schools. It appears to me that in respect of education, it is not the scheme that matters so much as the men that have to carry out the scheme. If only the men in charge of it are of the right sort, any scheme however defective or ill-designed, may be thought to have a whole new effect and even a good scheme is bound to suffer in the hands of undesirable men.

FROM PAGE ONE

Congress will have a new rising, says Sonia

The party announced wide-ranging organisational changes, including setting up of three new departments – public insight, national training and election management. Though a key demand of G-23 – the ginger group pushing for internal reforms – to revive the Parliamentary Board was not accepted, Ms. Gandhi announced the setting up of an advisory group from among Congress Working Committee (CWC) members which would meet regularly to discuss political matters. But she made it clear that it was "not a collective decision-making body".

Other significant reforms include adopting the 'one family, one ticket' rule , 'one person, one post' norm, 50% party posts to people below 50 years of age, setting up of a political affairs committee in every State and a mechanism to evaluate the performance of the office-bearers. Any exception to the 'one family, one ticket' rule can be made only when another family member has been working in the party for at least five years. No person should hold one party position for more than five years to give opportunity to new people, the party announced.

The Congress chief also announced a compact task force to drive internal reforms, with focus on the 2024 Lok Sabha election and will cover all aspects of the organisation, including structure, rules for appointments to party posts, communications and publicity, outreach, finances and election management.

In the political resolution of the Udaipur Declaration, the party said it was committed to establishing dialogue with all like-minded parties to protect the spirit of nationalism and democracy and would be open to forging alliances according to political circumstances.

The party said it would launch the second phase of the *Jan Jagran Abhiyan* on June 15 to highlight the "growing unemployment and intolerable inflation".

Only Congress can take on the BJP, says Rahul

However, he said the Congress needed to transform its style of communication but not its ideology.

The former Congress chief lauded the party's decisions to give more representation to the youth and empower them but added that "there should be a healthy mix of youngsters and seniors".

Mr. Gandhi asserted that there were "no shortcuts" to re-establishing the connect with the people except to fight for and stand with the people. As part of efforts to reconnect with the people, the Congress announced the *Bharat Jodo* [Unite India] campaign on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary on October 2. "This is the only way for us and there are no shortcuts to this. Anyone who thinks that it can be done through shortcuts it is not possible as it can only be achieved through sweat and hard work," he said.

The Congress leader also called for a massive reform of the party's communication strategy to reach out to the youth in a better way.

"The 21st century is about communication. And that is one area where our opponents outdo us... They have much more money and are better in communication. So, we must think about communication... completely reform our systems and communicate with the people of India, with the youngsters in a new way," Mr. Gandhi said.

Saha in charge, new Cabinet soon in Tripura

Dr. Saha said that he accepted the new position in order to respect the decision of the BJP leadership and said everyone in the party had to discharge any given responsibility with "pride and joy". "It's [BJP] not like any other political party and we all know how the party works," he said.

He said he would make sure that the rule of law prevailed, and that no law and order situation erupted anywhere in the State. He also sought cooperation from the Opposition parties.

Meanwhile, the BJP's central team, comprising Union Minister Bhupender Yadav, Tripura *prawari* Vinod Sonkar and party's national general secretaries Ajay Jamwal and Vinod Tawade, attended a meeting with party MLAs at the State guest house here. Dr. Saha, Mr. Deb, former Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Debbarman, Union Minister of State Pratima Bhowmik and senior party functionaries were present at the closed-door meeting.

The BJP currently has 33 members in the 60-member Assembly.

M.P. study finds hepatitis in COVID-hit children

"Hepatitis A and E are specific to certain villages or regions, B is present through the year and D is usually from a parent or from a blood transfusion. Last year, after the Delta wave, we saw these cases from all over the State, defying the usual histories," Mr. Rawat said.

Apart from the usual causative viruses, Mr. Rawat and his colleagues investigated multiple possibilities of the hepatitis occurring due to Epstein Barr virus, auto-immune disorders, and chickenpox virus (varicella). However, he noted, some children seemed to be testing positive when administered "irrelevant tests" such as those for dengue or varicella zoster. They surmised that the hepatitis was possibly due their immune systems behaving abnormally. "What was common in all children was a very high level of COVID antibodies," he added.

Mr. Rawat and his colleagues have reported their findings last week in the preprint repository, *Biorxiv*, and await publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

While Mr. Rawat's account of COVID-linked hepatitis in children is the most detailed out of India so far, there are reports from several countries postulating a link. The WHO said last week that 348 probable cases of "hepatitis of unknown origin" had been identified, and the prime suspect was an adenovirus along with a COVID-19 infection.

Mr. Rawat says it's only the tip of the iceberg as the numbers reported so far were only in children who were severely ill. Many more with less severe liver damage may have gone undiscovered.

Adani buys Ambuja, ACC for $10.5 bn

This deal makes Adani second largest cement player after UltraTech Cement of the Aditya Birla Group

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

The Adani family, through an offshore special purpose vehicle (SPV), said it had entered into definitive agreements for the acquisition of Switzerland-based Holcim Ltd.'s entire stake in Ambuja Cements Ltd. and ACC Ltd., two of India's leading cement companies.

Holcim, through its subsidiaries, holds 63.19% in Ambuja Cements and 54.53% in ACC (of which 50.05% is held through Ambuja Cements).

As per regulatory norms, an open offer has been made.

"The value for the Holcim stake and open offer consideration for Ambuja Cements and ACC is USD 10.5 billion, which makes this the largest ever acquisition by Adani, and India's largest ever M&A transaction in the infrastructure and materials space," the Adanis said in a statement.

Deal locked: Gautam Adani with Jan Jenisch, CEO of Holcim Ltd., after signing the agreement • TWITTER/@GAUTAM_ADANI

Second largest player

This deal makes Adani the second largest cement player after UltraTech Cement of the Aditya Birla Group. "Our move into the cement business is yet another validation of our belief in our nation's growth story," said Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group.

"Not only is India expected to remain one of the world's largest demand-driven economies for several decades, India also continues to be the world's second largest cement market and yet has less than half of the global average per capita cement consumption," he said.

"I am delighted that the Adani Group is acquiring our business in India to lead its next era of growth," said Jan Jenisch, CEO of Holcim Ltd in a statement. Ambuja Cements and ACC currently have a combined installed production capacity of 70 MTPA. They have 23 cement plants, 14 grinding stations, 80 ready-mix concrete plants and over 50,000 channel partners across India. "Both Ambuja and ACC will benefit from synergies with the integrated Adani infrastructure platform, especially in the areas of raw material, renewable power and logistics, where Adani Portfolio companies have vast experience and deep expertise. This will enable higher margins and return on capital employed for the two companies," the Adani group statement said. The acquisition is subject to regulatory approvals and conditions.

Quint buy

The Adanis seem to be on an acquisition spree. On May 13, 2022, Adani Enterprises Ltd informed the stock exchanges that its wholly owned subsidiary AMG Media Networks Ltd, has signed an agreement to acquire 49% stake in Quintillion Media Ltd and Quintillion Business Media Ltd. The deal, for an unspecified amount, also includes Quint Digital Media Ltd.

Civilian killed amid Shopian encounter

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

A civilian died of bullet wounds in a gunfight between security forces and militants in Shopian of south Kashmir. A magisterial inquiry has been ordered into the incident.

The victim has been identified as Shoib Ahmad Ganai, a 22-year-old shopkeeper.

The police said militants fired upon a joint patrol party of the CRPF and the police's special operation group. "During an exchange of fire between terrorists and our joint team, one civilian got injured. He was referred to the district hospital in Pulwama for treatment where he died of injuries," a police spokesman said.

The police said the militants, after a brief "chance encounter", managed to slip into nearby orchards.

Local people alleged that the security forces fired upon the victim as he was asked to raise his hands.

PM to launch Buddhist centre work

In a visit to Lumbini, Modi will speak at Buddha Jayanti event organised by Nepal

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the construction of the India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage on Monday during a day-long visit to Lumbini in Nepal.

The visit will coincide with the celebrations to mark the Buddha Jayanti.

Lumbini is the place where Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born around 623 BC.

He later attained enlightenment at Bodhgaya in Bihar district and came to be known as the Buddha.

Buddha Jayanti

Mr. Modi will participate in the *shilanyas* [foundation stone laying] ceremony for the India International Centre and offer prayers at the Mayadevi temple that is dedicated to the mother of the Buddha.

He will also deliver an address at a Buddha Jayanti event organised by the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) of the Nepal government.

Timely visit: Narendra Modi's visit to Lumbini comes two days after Nepal began the local election process. • FILE PHOTO

An official press release has said that the work on the centre will be undertaken by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), which is a "grantee body" under the Ministry of Culture.

The International Buddhist Confederation was registered on November 2, 2012, and is aimed at propagating and preserving the teachings and heritage of the Buddha across the world, and especially in India's immediate neighbourhood.

The official statement from India said that the Buddhist centre would be the first "net zero emission" building in Nepal.

Mahabodhi sapling

Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is scheduled to participate in the event in Lumbini. Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra had said earlier that Mr. Modi gifted a sapling of the Mahabodhi tree of Bodhgaya to the Mayadevi temple.

Both sides will hold a delegation-level talk after the ceremonies.

The two Prime Ministers will "build on their productive conversations in Delhi, with a view to further expanding our shared understanding and cooperation in multiple areas, including in hydropower development, partnership and connectivity", the Foreign Secretary said during a briefing last Friday.

Celebration in Delhi

Buddha Jayanti will also be celebrated by the IBC in Delhi on Monday where the event will be led by Union Minister of Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju.

"International Buddhist Confederation has been actively involved in engaging Buddhist organisations in Nepal and has a strong relationship with several senior Buddhist monks," the official press release said.

Mr. Modi's visit to Lumbini comes two days after Nepal began the local election process across the country that will ultimately lead to the general election towards the end of the year.

Probe into use of force on Pandit protest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday ordered an inquiry into the alleged use of force on protesting Kashmiri Pandits at Sheikhpora area of Budgam district earlier this week.

The government has ordered a probe into the incident with a clear message that anyone found involved will not be spared and action under law shall be initiated against him, Mr. Sinha said.

"A Special Investigation Team has been formed to probe into all aspects of (Pandit employee) Rahul Bhat's killing and it will also look into the tear gas shelling incident. Strict action will be taken against those found guilty," L-G Sinha said.

The J&K Police had fired smoke shells and used batons to disperse Pandits protesting against the killing of a Pandit employee in his office in Budgam by militants. The L-G administration has passed fresh directions "not to use any force anywhere" against protesting Pandits.

Defending the use of force against protesting Pandits near Sheikhpora, a police spokesman earlier said that there were inputs that (militants) may take advantage and may attack the protesters in order to create communal clash or tension. "Therefore, in view of this, while sensing the security of the protesters who had resorted to violence and neglected the pacification requests by administration and to thwart evil designs of anti-national elements , the police were constrained to finally hurl few teargas smokes to disperse them," the police said then.

Members of the Peoples' Alliance For Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) met Mr. Sinha at the Raj Bhavan here. Farooq Abdullah, who was leading the delegation, raised the demands made by protesting Pandits in Kashmir Valley, especially about their security and positing to safer locations.

Nature's fury

Caught in current: A railway bridge that was damaged in heavy rain in Dima Hasao district of Assam. As of Sunday, at least three persons were killed and three were missing following landslips in the district. • PTI

Two held on recovery of red meat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RATLAM

Right-wing organisations on Sunday blocked a road in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam city for three hours after bones and red meat, suspected to be of a cow, were found strewn across Idgah Road, prompting the administration to demolish "illegal" parts of houses of two persons allegedly involved in the incident.

Manak Chowk police station inspector Anurag Yadav said the police detained Mubarik Qureshi and Asif Qureshi in connection with the recovery of red meat and bones. An FIR has been registered against them.

'Only one State can decide on remission'

No concurrent jurisdiction, says SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Remission or premature release of a convict has to be considered in terms of the policy applicable in the State where the crime was committed and not where the trial was transferred to and concluded, the Supreme Court has said.

A Bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and Vikram Nath said under Section 432(7) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973, there cannot be a concurrent jurisdiction of two State governments on the issue of remission.

Plea by convict

The top court was hearing a plea by a convict seeking direction to the State of Gujarat to consider his application for premature release under the policy dated July 9, 1992, which was existing at the time of his conviction.

Though the crime was committed in Gujarat, the top court in 2004 had transferred the case to Mumbai due to the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case.

The top court said in the instant case, once the crime was committed in Gujarat, after the trial concluded and judgment of conviction came to be passed, all further proceedings have to be considered, including remission or premature release, as the case may be, in terms of the policy which is applicable in Gujarat where the crime was committed and not the State where the trial stands transferred and concluded for exceptional reasons under the orders of the court.

"The respondents are directed to consider the application of the petitioner for premature release in terms of its policy dated 9th July, 1992, which is applicable on the date of conviction and may be decided within a period of two months. If any adverse order is passed, the petitioner is at liberty to seek remedy available to him under the law," the Bench said.

Assam tribunals told not to rely on NRC

'There are errors, things may change when the final list gets published'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The State Coordinator of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) has reminded members of Foreigners' Tribunals (FTs) across Assam to not consider the draft NRC and its supplementary list as reliable evidence for the disposal of cases.

An FT is a quasi-judicial body tasked with deciding the status of citizenship of people suspected to be or marked as foreigners. An FT member is like a judge.

Hitesh Dev Sarma, the State Coordinator, had on April 18 issued letters to the FT members. "Since the Registrar General of Citizens Registration (RGCR) has not declared NRC as final and there are errors, things may change when the final NRC gets published," he wrote.

About 19.06 lakh out of 3.3 crore applicants were excluded from the complete NRC draft published on August 31, 2019.

An FT member, declining to be quoted, responded to Mr. Sarma's letter on May 10, insisting that the NRC was final and was published in compliance with various orders and judgments of the Supreme Court and through a notification of the RGCR.

He cited Clause 7 of the Citizenship Rules of 2003 and a press statement by former State Coordinator Prateek Hajela on August 31, 2019, "whereby it was clear that the published NRC is the final NRC". The member also said the NRC lists (draft, additional draft and supplementary list) are mentioned as final NRC on the official website. Saying the "final NRC published under the supervision of the Supreme Court and notification of RGCR" is not final was in contrast with the available records and orders of the top court, the FT member said.

Adding that the State Coordinator "cannot propagate his wrong understanding of law, rules, notifications and orders of the Supreme Court", the member advised him to "withdraw his letter and stop interfering in the lawful functioning of the Foreigners' Tribunals which is beyond your jurisdiction and limits of power".

Mr. Sarma said he has not received the letter yet. "Only the RGI (Registrar General of India) and Hajela is authorised to publish the final NRC, which is yet to be done. The Supreme Court asked Hajela to publish the supplementary list of inclusions and exclusions, not the final NRC. Some FT members have been giving judgements claiming the NRC as final," Mr. Sarma told *The Hindu*.

APPEAL

Baby Kathiresan,10 months old, needs your support in bringing a lasting change and a new life. He suffers from B Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and has to undergo Chemotherapyh at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. He urgently needs Rs. 8,00,000/- for his treatment. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring **Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged**. The donations sent through CHD./NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch. A/c No. 60182010063310. IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT **(Please do not mention patient name on the cheque).**

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No. GF 1, Cordel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No. 29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401/ 28235324/ 7338978027. E-mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com**. Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.

WWS

Gyanvapi survey to continue today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
VARANASI

A court-mandated videography survey of the Gyanvapi Masjid complex here was carried out peacefully for the second consecutive day on Sunday, with the major part of the exercise said to have been completed.

The survey, which was stalled last week amid objections by the mosque management committee, which claimed that the advocate commissioner appointed by the court for the survey did not have the mandate to film inside the premises, will continue on Monday.

The mosque is located close to the iconic Kashi Vishwanath temple, and the local court is hearing a plea by a group of women seeking permission for daily prayers before the idols on its outer walls.

The survey was carried out from 8 a.m. to noon amid tight security.

Buy wheat till May 31, Centre tells States

Extension of procurement season to benefit farmers, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday asked wheat-producing States and Union Territories whose procurement closing dates were expiring early to keep procuring wheat till May 31.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, in a statement, said that the extension of the procurement season was "expected to benefit farmers". It added that the decision was taken after the States and the Union Territories requested to extend the procurement season.

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) had also been directed to continue procurement under the Central pool, the Ministry said. The procurement of wheat under the Central pool had progressed smoothly during the Rabi marketing season (RMS) 2022-23 in Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Bihar and Rajasthan, it said. The season runs from April to March.

Stock up: The Food Corporation of India has been directed to continue procurement under the Central pool. • PTI

"The wheat procurement under Central pool has been less during ensuing RMS 2022-23 corresponding to previous RMS 2021-22, mainly due to the higher market prices than MSP, wherein farmers have been selling wheat to private traders. The Central government had on May 13 decided to restrict export of wheat to rein in high prices of wheat, except in case of irrevocable letter of credit and requests from neighbouring/food-deficit countries," it said. Till May 14, 180 lakh tonnes had been procured, compared with 367 lakh tonnes during RMS 2021-22, giving 16.83 lakh farmers an MSP value of ₹36,208 crore.

Devasahayam Pillai declared saint

He is the first Indian layman to be canonised; Pope Francis presides over ceremony

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
VATICAN CITY

Devasahayam Pillai, who embraced Christianity in the 18th century, on Sunday became the first Indian layman to be declared a saint by Pope Francis during an impressive canonisation ceremony here at the Vatican.

Devasahayam was recommended for the process of Beatification by the Vatican in 2004, at the request of the Kottar diocese, the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council and the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India.

Pope Francis, 85, canonised Blessed Devasahayam during a Canonisation Mass at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

A miracle attributed to Devasahayam was recognised by Pope Francis in 2014, clearing the path to his canonisation in 2022.

It was the first canonisation ceremony at the Vatican in over two years. Pope Francis, who has been complaining of strained ligaments in his right knee for months, used a wheelchair to preside over the ceremony. Nine others, including four women, were also canonised along with Devasahayam. "Our calling is to serve the Gospel and our brothers and sisters, to offer our lives without expecting anything in return, or any worldly glory," the Pope said during the ceremony.

Holy day: Archbishop Thomas J. Netto unveiling a photo of the saint in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Being disciples of Jesus and advancing on the path of holiness means first and foremost letting ourselves be transfigured by the power of God's love," he said.

Travancore kingdom

Devasahayam was born on April 23, 1712 as Neelakanta Pillai into a Hindu Nair family, at Nattalam in Kanyakumari district, which was part of the erstwhile Travancore kingdom.

He was an official in the court of Travancore's Maharaja Marthanda Varma when he was instructed into the Catholic faith by a Dutch naval commander in 1745. He took the name "Lazarus", or "Devasahayam" in Malayalam, which translates to "God is my help".

"While preaching, he particularly insisted on the equality of all people, despite caste differences. This aroused the hatred of the higher classes, and he was arrested in 1749. After enduring increasing hardships, he received the crown of martyrdom when he was shot on January 14, 1752," a note prepared by the Vatican earlier had said.

Sites linked with his life and death are in Kottar Diocese, in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.

Devasahayam was declared Blessed on December 2, 2012, in Kottar, 300 years after his birth.

Rakesh blames BJP for rebellion in BKU(Tikait)

Disgruntled members form new outfit, cite lack of internal democracy

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

In a dramatic turn of events that could have socio-political ramifications in western Uttar Pradesh, the Tikait faction of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) faced rebellion on Sunday. The disgruntled members formed a new outfit called the BKU Airajnaitk (meaning apolitical) in Lucknow, citing a lack of internal democracy and overt politicisation of the farmer organisation.

Ironically, the division happened on a day the organisation was observing the death anniversary of its founder and perhaps the tallest farmer leader in western Uttar Pradesh, Mahendra Singh Tikait. Rakesh Tikait, spokesperson of the BKU, charged the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) for causing the division.

Though there are multiple factions of the BKU, it was the Tikait faction that led the farmer protests against the contentious farm laws in the region. This led to its revival and observers believe that its support played a major role in the Rashtriya Lok Dal-Samajwadi Party alliance's better performance in some districts of the sugarcane belt where the presence of the BKU and the *khap* was strong. It dealt a blow to the BJP's Jat leadership in the region.

Rakesh Tikait

The new organisation has appointed Rajendra Singh Malik, head of the Gathawala *khap*, who had been pro-government even during the farmer agitation, as its chairman/patron. It will be presided by Rajesh Singh Chauhan, a farmer leader from Fatehpur in eastern Uttar Pradesh, who was the vice-president of the BKU. "We had to make the decision under duress because the BKU moved away from the farmers' movement," Mr. Chauhan said.

Rajveer Singh, State vice-president of the new organisation, said, "The BKU cadre always stood by the farmers' cause but voted for different political parties. But before the Assembly elections, the BKU, under the Tikaits, started looking like the mouthpiece of the Opposition. It was not acceptable to us."

On the charge of politicisation and lack of internal democracy in the outfit, Mr. Tikait told *The Hindu* that those who wanted to leave home had to come up with some excuse. "Since the past two days we have been trying to listen to their demands, but they said they were left with no other option. It seems the government, threatened by our support among farmers, showed these people the fear of bulldozers and confiscation of their land," he said.

Rajiv Kumar takes charge as Chief Election Commissioner

He will preside over the 2024 Lok Sabha election

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Sunday assumed charge as the 25th Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).

Mr. Kumar succeeds Sushil Chandra, who retired on Saturday.

After assuming charge, Mr. Kumar said a lot had been done over the past 70 years by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure free and fair elections. "The Commission will follow the time-tested and democratic methods of consultations and consensus-building in bringing about any major reforms responsible under the Constitution. ECI will not shy away from taking tough decisions," he said.

Rajiv Kumar taking charge as the CEC in New Delhi on Sunday. • PTI

Mr. Kumar added that technology would be used further to simplify processes and to bring about transparency and ease of voter services.

A former Finance Secretary, Mr. Kumar will preside over the 2024 Lok Sabha election as his tenure as the CEC is till February 2025.

Showing support: M. Venkaiah Naidu with Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. • PTI

Venkaiah visits UAE to offer condolences

Sheikh Khalifa passed away on Friday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ABU DHABI

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday visited the UAE and offered condolences on the demise of former President of the UAE and ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Mr. Naidu reaffirmed that India and its people stood by the UAE at this difficult time.

Sheikh Khalifa passed away on Friday after battling illness for several years. He was 73. Mr. Naidu, on landing here at noon, went straight to Mushrif Palace and offered his condolences to Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, newly elected President of the UAE, the royal family and the entire UAE leadership, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

He conveyed the condolences of President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Govt. lowering morale of U.P. police: SP chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday accused the Adityanath government of lowering the morale of the Uttar Pradesh police by removing its chief Mukul Goel.

Mr. Goel was, on May 11, removed from the post of Director-General of Police on charge of inefficiency and neglecting his work. He was then appointed Director-General of the Civil Defence department. Later D.S. Chauhan was made acting DGP of the State.

"Removing the DGP of U.P. on the allegation that he used to disregard government work, did not take interest in departmental work and was inefficient is a very childish excuse. It has lowered the morale of the police force, Yadav said in a tweet.

He asked whether Mr. Goel's eligibility was not checked at the time of his appointment.

Hardik meets influential Patidar leader Naresh

Speculation is rife that disgruntled leader may quit Cong.

MAHESH LANGA
AHMEDABAD

Disgruntled Gujarat Congress leader Hardik Patel, who stayed away from the three-day *Chintan Shivir* (brainstorming session) of the party in Udaipur, on Sunday met Naresh Patel, an influential leader of the Patidar community, in Saurashtra and requested him to take a call on joining politics at the earliest.

Mr. Hardik was accompanied by Patidar agitation leaders Alpesh Kathiria and Dinesh Bambhania. Following the meeting, Mr. Hardik told reporters that they had told "Nareshbhai to take the call at the earliest".

Mr. Naresh said his decision would come in the next few days as he was still consulting with the community leaders in every district.

The meeting assumes significance amid a growing buzz in the State that Mr. Hardik is likely to part ways with the Congress ahead of the Assembly election in the State.

Hardik Patel

The 28-year old leader has been unhappy with the Congress leadership and has publicly hit out at the State leaders for not allowing him and other youth leaders to work in the party set-up.

Mr. Hardik was last seen with Congress leaders on May 10 when former party chief Rahul Gandhi held a tribal convention in Dahod. At the convention, Mr. Gandhi showered praises on another youth leader and prominent Dalit activist Jignesh Mevani.

As the Congress brainstorming session was under way in Udaipur, Mr. Hardik, in a series of TV interviews, questioned the party leadership. He, however, skirted questions about why he did not attend the *Chintan Shivir*, saying he had pre-decided engagements in Gujarat.

Speculation is rife that Mr. Hardik could switch over to the BJP. Though he has publicly denied this, his consistent remarks against the Congress's State unit leadership and his absence from the brainstorming session have fuelled the speculation. Last month, Mr. Hardik praised the BJP leadership calling it "decisive".

Brainstorming session of Gujarat BJP begins

Top leaders discuss poll strategy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

A two-day brainstorming session of the Gujarat BJP began at a resort on the outskirts of Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and other top leaders of the State unit discussed strategy for the upcoming Assembly poll in the State.

"The meeting will discuss plans on how to win 182 seats in the upcoming election. Plans are prepared, opinions of the leaders are taken and decisions are made. The executive body of the State BJP will meet again once the poll process begins," State BJP spokesperson Yagnesh Dave said.

Various presentations were made on Sunday about the achievements of the State government led by Bhupendra Patel. The welfare initiatives of the government were also showcased.

सरदार वल्लभभाई पटेल इंटरनेशनल स्कूल ऑफ टेक्सटाइल्स एंड मैनेजमेंट
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REQUIRES

S.No.	Name of the post	No. of posts
1.	Asst. Prof. - Management & Business Analytics	(5 Posts)
2.	Asst. Prof. - Textile & Apparel	(6 Posts)
3.	Admission cum Placement & Training officer	(1 Post)

For qualification, experience, application & other details visit website : www.svpitm.ac.in Last date for receipt of applications is on or before 2.6.2022.
Director.

Actor sent to police custody for Pawar post

Leaders cutting across party lines condemn Facebook comment about NCP chief

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

A Thane court on Sunday remanded Marathi actor Ketaki Chitale, who was arrested by the Thane police for allegedly sharing an objectionable Facebook post about Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar, in police custody till May 18.

The comments drew wide condemnation from leaders cutting across party lines. The NCP chief's daughter and MP Supriya Sule, his nephew and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, BJP leader and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray were among those who condemned Ms. Chitale's remarks.

Sharad Pawar

The 29-year-old Ms. Chitale, a resident of Pune who has acted in television and in films, is known to have made controversial remarks in the past too. As many as five cases have been lodged against her for sharing a derogatory post on Mr. Sharad Pawar's appearance and illness and qualifying it with indecorous remarks.

Dubbing Ms. Chitale's comments against Mr. Pawar as "unfortunate" and one that could only be made by a "perverted mind", Mr. Ajit Pawar said that despite the NCP chief being active in public life for nearly 60 years, he had never made disparaging or derogatory remarks against anyone.

"This is Maharashtra's misfortune... While the Constitution has indeed guaranteed citizens the right to free speech, people need to understand what they speak and the impact it can have on society... Despite Sharad Pawar having been active in the public sphere for 60 years, he has never made uncharitable comments against anybody despite facing criticism and enduring allegations," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

Speaking in Nashik, Ms. Sule, who is the MP for Baramati, said that wishing a person's death was utterly indefensible behaviour that did not fit in any culture.

Besides Ms. Chitale, a 23-year-old pharmacy student Nikhil Bhamre was arrested on May 14 in Nashik for allegedly sharing objectionable social media posts about the NCP chief on Twitter.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सा.नि.वि. (ग्रामीण) वृत उदयपुर
क्रमांक: टी.एस./निविदा/22-23/221 दिनांक: 06.05.2022
निविदा सूचना संख्या 04/2022-23
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से राजस्थान सरकार के "ए" "ए" श्रेणी के ठेकेदारों एवं केन्द्रीय सरकार/ राज्य सरकार व उनके अधिकृत संगठनों में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के "ए" "ए" श्रेणी के ठेकेदारों के समकक्ष हो उनसे निर्धारित निविदा प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्योरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से संबंधित विवरण इन्टरनेट साईट www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, www.dipronline.org व http://sppp.raj.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।

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ऑनलाईन निविदा फार्म मिलने की दिनांक	09.05.2022 से 02.06.2022 सायं 6.00 बजे तक
ऑनलाईन निविदा खोलने की तारीख	03.06.2022 सायं 04.00 बजे

निविदा से संबंधित विवरण वेबसाईट http://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in, http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। सम्पूर्ण निविदा प्रक्रिया http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर ऑनलाईन सम्पादित की जावेगी।
नोट: निविदा द्वारा धरोहर राशि/ निविदा शुल्क/ निविदा प्रोसेसिंग शुल्क सहायक सचिव वित्त बजट विभाग राजस्थान जयपुर के परिपत्र क्रमांक प.6 (5) वित्त/ सामिनि/2018 दिनांक 27.04.2020 के अनुसार ई-प्रणाली के माध्यम द्वारा जमा कराना होगा एवं फाईल खण्ड कार्यालय में प्रस्तुत करना होगा अथवा कार्यालय मुख्य अभियन्ता सा.नि.वि. राजस्थान जयपुर के परिपत्र क्रमांक मु.अ./वि.स./परिपत्र/2021-22/ई-63 दिनांक 05.01.2022 के अनुसार जमा कराने होगी।
निविदा शर्तें: 1. निविदा शर्तें किसी भी दिन कार्यालय समय में देखी जा सकती है।

NIB No. PWD2223A0396	
UBN No. PWD2223WS0801334	UBN No. PWD2223WS0801335
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UBN No. PWD2223WS0801338	UBN No. PWD2223WS0801339
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UBN No. PWD2223WS0801342	UBN No. PWD2223WS0801343
UBN No. PWD2223WS0801344	

डीआईपीआर/सी/6662/2022
(पी.आर. मीना), अधीक्षण अभियन्ता सा.नि.वि. (ग्रामीण) वृत उदयपुर

कार्यालय अति. मुख्य अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, संभाग, टोंक
क्रमांक: 360-371 दिनांक: 06.05.2022
निविदा सूचना संख्या: 02/2022-23
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से वर्ष 2022-23 के अन्तर्गत सवाई माधोपुर, दौसा जिलों में एम एच / एम.डी.आर./ओ.डी.आर. एवं वी.आर. सड़कों का सुदृढ़ीकरण एवं चौड़ीकरण के कुल 5 कार्य हेतु मय 5 पाँच वर्ष की डिफेक्ट लाईबिलिटी सहित उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग राजस्थान एवं राज्य सरकार के अन्य विभागों तथा केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों/ केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग/ डाक एवं तार संचार विभाग/ रेलवे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के "ए" एवं "एए" श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो से कार्यों हेतु ई-टेण्डरिंग के माध्यम से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में प्रपत्र की जावेगी। निविदा से संबंधित विवरण वेबसाईट www.dipronline.org व www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in एवं www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।
NIB Code PWD2223A0383, UBN No.: 1. PWD2223WL0801285, 2. PWD2223WL0801287, 3. PWD2223WL0801289, 4. PWD2223WL0801291, 5. PWD2223WL0801293
डीआईपीआर/सी/6660/2022
(आर. एम. बैरवा), अति. मुख्य अभियन्ता, सा.नि.वि. संभाग टोंक

BHARAT DYNAMICS LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprises)
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
GACHIBOWLI, HYDERABAD-500 032.
Ref: BDL/CC/OT/GT/001 /2022-23 Dt: 16.05.2022
e-PROCUREMENT ABRIDGE TENDER NOTICE
Inviting Indigenous Competitive Bidding

Sl.No.	Tender ID	Description	Estimate in ₹
1	64366	Construction of First Floor of integration Building (North Side), BDL, vizag	410.47 lakhs

Please visit website https://bdltenders.abcprocure.com for further details. Bids should be submitted online only. *corrigendum if any shall be issued through our e-portal only and not in Newspapers"
Addl. General Manager (Corp Comml)

NHRC issues notice on Delhi fire

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Sunday issued notice to the Delhi Chief Secretary, seeking a report on the Mundka building fire within two weeks, and has decided to send its own team to investigate the site.

The NHRC asked the Chief Secretary to inform it about the action taken against the officials responsible. The commission also asked its Director-General to immediately send a team for an on-the-spot investigation.

"According to the media reports... the building had no sanctioned plan and the factory was operating without any licence. The fact has reportedly come out in an enquiry conducted by the North Delhi Municipal Corporation," the NHRC said.

Mundka building owner arrested

AAP claims that the arrested Manish Lakra had connections with BJP, the latter denies the charge

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have arrested the owner of the four-storey building at Mundka in outer Delhi which caught fire two days ago, killing at least 27 persons and injuring many.

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal approved a magisterial inquiry into the fire, officials said on Sunday. The Delhi government issued an order appointing the District Magistrate (West) as the inquiry officer, who will submit the report within six weeks.

The accused, identified as Manish Lakra, was arrested after multiple searches were carried out across Delhi and Haryana, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Sameer Sharma said.

"We had received information that he had planned to go to Haridwar," the DCP added.

The arrest led to a political slugfest with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) claiming that Mr. Lakra had connections with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The latter denied the allegation.

"Mr. Lakra and his family escaped by climbing down from the next building," the police said.

Negligent act: Delhi Fire Service officers have said the building in Mundka did not possess a no-objection certificate. • PTI

The DCP added that the police were trying to trace Mr. Lakra's family.

Co-accused held

Earlier, the police had arrested co-accused Harish and Varun Goel, who owned the CCTV company which was being run on three floors. The police said the four-storey building was constructed by Baljeet Lakra in 2011-12 and was transferred to his son, Manish, after his death in 2015.

A case has been lodged at the Mundka police station under Sections of the Indian Penal Code pertaining to causing death by negligence, attempt to commit culpable homicide, party to criminal conspiracy, and others.

Delhi Fire Service officers had said that no NOC (no-objection certificate) was issued for the property while tenant verification and police clearance certificates were not issued as well.

On Sunday, the DCP said that only eight bodies had been identified.

Political slugfest

The AAP, presenting photographs at a press conference, attempted to connect Mr. Lakra to the BJP and blame the BJP for the fire. Senior AAP leader Durgesh Pathak said Mr. Lakra could be seen wearing the BJP's *patka* on many occasions.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said Mr. Lakra was not a BJP member nor had ever held any party position and hit out at the AAP for spreading lies.

CCI doing market study of film distribution in India

Aim is to understand competition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) is conducting a market study on film distribution in the country, with the larger intention of exploring the possibility of a self-regulatory mechanism within the industry to ensure a competitive landscape.

The antitrust watchdog has completed a study to understand the scenario where large institutional shareholders hold minority stakes in companies that are active in the same industry.

A market study on film distribution has been commissioned to gain insights into various aspects of the state of competition and concerns over anti-competitive practices in the film distribution chain, CCI Chairperson Ashok Kumar Gupta said.

The study also comes against the backdrop of digitisation and OTT (over-the-top) platforms becoming key factors in the film space.

To have a better understanding of the "market construct and dynamics", the CCI has commissioned the study and the "intention is also to explore whether there can be a self-regulatory mechanism within the industry for ensuring a competitive landscape," Mr. Gupta said.

"The study is an attempt to understand the role of various federations and associations in the industry in India, and the horizontal and vertical arrangements that exist between the market players," the CCI chief said.

According to him, new issues have arisen with the digitisation of cinema and the use of technology.

Sizzling North

Cool respite: Children cooling down in New Delhi, as the heatwave caused the mercury to climb up to 49 degrees Celsius in a few places in the national capital and the rest of North India on Sunday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Facing discrimination despite laws

Petitions by transgender persons draw attention to their plight in the job market

ABHINAY LAKSHMAN
NEW DELHI

More than three years after she was denied a job in the Maharashtra State Police force despite passing the written exam because a medical test declared her a "man" citing anatomical anomalies even she was not aware of, the Bombay High Court on May 12 cleared the way for the woman's appointment, asking the Maharashtra government to finalise it in two months. The court has masked the woman's name in this case.

Despite the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, which was brought to end discrimination against transgender persons in accessing education, employment and healthcare, and recognise the right to self-perceived gender identity, their harassment continues endlessly.

> **When I let them know I am a trans, they don't even bother to shortlist me for the interview**
> JANE KAUSHIK

Existing structures continuing to categorise people into the binary of male and female has resulted in the need for them to approach the courts or governments repeatedly for the implementation of every single aspect of the law that was passed to protect them.

Though the Transgender Identity Certificate acknowledges the gender assigned at birth and gender requested, while applying for jobs they are often compelled to identify themselves as male or female in the absence of a third option.

The "disgusting stares" from people in public places, says 30-year-old transman Kabir, is unbearable. Once Kabir went for a school teacher's job interview and the panel mentioned that a sari was the mandatory attire in school. "I did not know how to respond. I had not fully transitioned and I wore what I thought was the most gender-neutral attire, a *kurta* and jeans," Kabir said.

Trans-woman Jane Kaushik, 29, is fed up of applying for jobs. "When I let them know I am a trans, they don't even bother to shortlist me for the interview," she said. She decided to go through the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board, but she saw there was no option to identify as third gender.

Jane approached an NGO for help to get the job application forms revised with an option for third gender, which was done in 2021.

However, the updated version, following the intervention of Social Justice Ministry, does not allow re-registration after a correction is made in the gender column and this has been a problem for transgender persons. Jane approached the Delhi High Court with a plea to enable re-registration and also sought reservation for transgender persons in government jobs.

Though reservation for trans people under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category is under consideration by the government, Jane's petition in the Delhi High Court, and the petition in the Bombay High Court seek separate reservation. Jane told *The Hindu* that the government ought to move beyond just making laws and show through meaningful action like reservation that it wants to mainstream transgender persons.

Indian company produces tactical battery for battlefield

Pravaig field pack to help NATO military forces

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

A Bengaluru-based venture has produced a rugged tactical battery that it is now planning to sell to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces in Europe.

The heavy-duty power bank – Pravaig Field Pack – is portable and weighs 14 kilograms.

It is of great utility to the digitally connected modern military and special forces personnel who have to operate in high-risk zones such as Ukraine and Libya, while using gadgets that require constant power back-up.

"These batteries are designed, engineered and made in India. This supply marks a major shift in the defence landscape of India – a tipping point in the reversal of India's high technology defence industry, from users to developers, from importers to exporters," said Pravaig's Siddhartha Bagri.

In a statement, Pravaig said that the field pack can be used to charge a MacBook 60 times.

> **These batteries are designed, engineered and made in India. This supply marks a major shift in the defence landscape of India**
> SIDDHARTHA BAGRI

The field pack can be used to energise a military person's field duties and it can be used to deploy remote sensors. A powerful tactical battery can be used even to operate larger military equipment such as drones and it can even help coordinate tactical operations which involves multiple weapons systems.

"At this time, we are making the prototypes and we are going to present them at Eurosatory 2022 in Paris, which is a global event of defence and security professionals. So many countries will have the opportunity to see this technology. But our goal in the future is to equip NATO forces," said Hippolyte Berger, who is part of the team that is promoting the Pravaig Field Pack.

As illustrated by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, digital coordination is now part of the battlefield readiness of modern soldiers and special forces personnel.

Electronic platforms

This calls upon modern military forces to train soldiers in the use of electronic platforms even during live conflicts.

The Pravaig Field Pack is one such tactical battery that aims to support the operational ability of modern soldiers in battlefield conditions.

Woman in Meghalaya tied to pole, panel seeks action

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW) has asked the State police to take note of an incident where a woman, allegedly accused of being a pickpocket, was tied to a pole at a marketplace.

Officials said the police in Jowai, headquarters of the West Jaintia Hills district, have started an investigation.

The MSCW took note of a viral video showing unidentified persons dragging the woman to a shed for questioning, after which she was tied to a pole for a crowd to abuse.

The video was said to be shot in Jowai.

Unacceptable action

"We have sought action since the people took law into their hands instead of handing over the woman to the police. Such an incident is unacceptable in any civilised society," MSCW chairperson Phidalia Toi said.

She said the commission had asked the victim to lodge an FIR with the police against all who had shamed her in public.

"She declined and therefore, we directed the police to act on their own," she added.

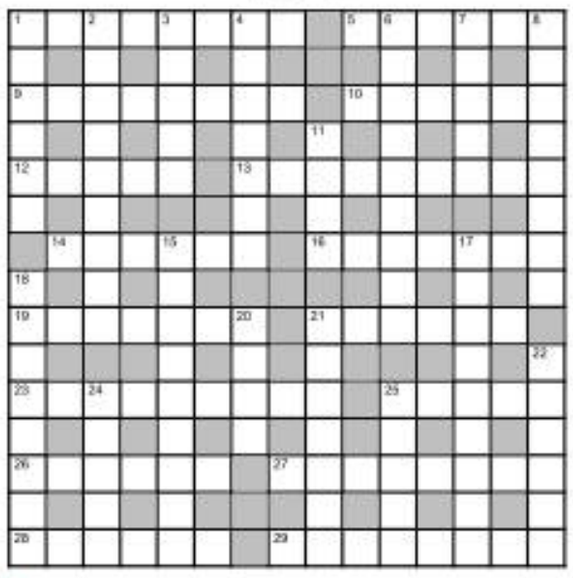
A district police official said some witnesses of the incident have been summoned for recording their statements.

TH CROSSWORD + 13557

(set by Lightning)

Display keystrokes of genius. Play online, type your answers in. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



ACROSS

1 Sticking together with prisoner going around this place on time (8)
5 Short place for storing valuables at eastern Java perhaps (6)
9 Prime concern of religious house without appeal (8)
10 About to break group's confidential information (6)
12 Learner moving to the end to rent art stand (5)
13 Essential substance in a radio broadcast? (9)
14 Primarily feature of species seen imprinted later (6)
16 Six trapped in lawsuit that is meaningless (7)
19 Tone down a painting material (7)
21 Black coal left aside to set ablaze (6)
23 Head of technology replacing carbon to give confidence to company (9)
25 Poetry very brief – lacking introduction (5)
26 Ranger managed to shelter Einstein say (6)
27 Choice to go around last university – it may be simple (8)
28 A week in hospital emergency room for salesman (6)
29 Lacking knowledge of rating on liquid (8)

DOWN

1 Code of conduct is presently having errors – rectify for starters (6)
2 Physical injury restrains one lost at sea in heavy downpour (9)
3 River essentially pure, and a lake characteristic of country (5)
4 Ancient city in South African province is not artificial (7)
6 Speech about physical education for an activity (9)
7 Scientist reshaped engineering firm (5)
8 Net cast with inclination to snare (8)
11 Correct course, turn back (4)
15 Please cut out risk (9)
17 Break spent very intensely active at first among other things (5,4)
18 Basically good talent, hard to be shaped fully (2,6)
20 A container is partially open (4)
21 Half of instrument to remain and regularly drag floater (7)
22 License for every American university (6)
24 Fling bed cover (5)
25 Instruction to see old film that is recorded (5)

SUDOKU

	8			5			2	
		7		8				3
2	4							8
		4		2	5			9
		2				6		
9			7	4		2		
7							9	5
3				6		7		
	1			7			3	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13556

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

5	1	8	9	4	3	6	2	7
3	9	4	7	2	6	5	8	1
2	6	7	8	5	1	9	4	3
8	3	9	5	7	4	2	1	6
6	7	2	1	9	8	3	5	4
1	4	5	3	6	2	7	9	8
7	5	3	4	8	9	1	6	2
9	8	6	2	1	7	4	3	5
4	2	1	6	3	5	8	7	9

FAITH

Be wary of desire

There are many lessons to be learnt from the story of Dhruva narrated in the Bhagavata Purana, pointed out Sri B. Sundarkumar in a discourse. When the severe penance of Dhruva began to shake the three worlds, and all beings were unable to breathe owing to the boy's perfect breath control, the Lord reached Madhuvana to grace him. The Lord hid Himself from Dhruva's inner vision to make him open his eyes. Dhruva then was amazed to see the same Lord before him. He fell at His feet and though he wished to praise Him, he was unable to do so.

The Lord touched the child's cheek with His conch which is the embodiment of the Vedas and Dhruva was thus endowed with excellent power of speech to express the Brahma jnana that was revealed to him. He prays to be granted true bhakti at the feet of the Lord, and sings the advantages of association with the pious.

This is the way to augment bhakti and it will also enable the devotee to be detached from worldly attractions that hinder one from being totally immersed in God. God then blesses him and asks him to get back to the kingdom and rule the country for 36,000 years after which he will ascend a very unique and high state that will be his eternal abode. Having seen God in person, is it not a setback for Dhruva to get back to samsara? Isn't such separation from God for such a long period too rigorous a punishment for the child's simple desire to sit on the lap of his father? So every human desire sows the seed for further birth and repeated entanglement with samsara and one has to be wary of desires. Dhruva himself is sad that he was foolish enough to let slip the chance to seek moksha from the Lord who alone can grant it.

10 killed in U.S. grocery store shooting

The 18-year-old shooter who live-streamed the 'racially motivated' attack in Buffalo was arrested later

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BUFFALO

A heavily armed 18-year-old white man shot 10 persons dead on Saturday at a Buffalo, New York grocery store in a "racially motivated" attack that he live-streamed on camera, authorities said.

The gunman, who was wearing body armor and a helmet, was arrested after the massacre, Buffalo Police Commissioner Joseph Gramaglia told a news conference.

Mr. Gramaglia put the toll at 10 dead and three wounded. Eleven of the victims were African Americans.

The gunman shot four persons in the parking lot of the Tops supermarket, three of them fatally, then went inside and continued firing, Mr. Gramaglia said.

Among those killed inside the store was a retired police officer working as an armed security guard.

The guard "engaged the suspect, fired multiple shots," but the gunman shot him, Mr. Gramaglia said.

Echoing sympathy: Mourners gathering at a vigil for victims of the shooting at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York, U.S., on Sunday. Eleven of the victims were African Americans. • REUTERS

He added that when police arrived, the shooter put the gun to his neck, but was talked down and surrendered.

Stephen Belongia, special agent in charge of the FBI's Buffalo field office, told the news conference that the shooting is being investigated as a hate crime.

"We are investigating this incident as both a hate crime and a case of racially motivated violent extremism," Mr. Belongia said.

When asked what information led authorities to term the attack a hate crime, Erie County District Attorney John Flynn said they had evidence indicating "racial animosity," but declined to elaborate.

U.S. media outlets have reported officials are investigating a detailed "manifesto" posted online before the shooting, in which the suspect outlines his plans and racial motivations for the attack.

'Inspired act'

Quoting from the manifesto, the *New York Times* reported the suspect had been "inspired" by white supremacist acts of violence, including the massacre of 51 Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019.

A semi-automatic weapon used in Saturday's shooting also had a racial epithet written on it as well as the number 14 – a reference to a white supremacist phrase – according to local daily *The Buffalo News*, citing a local official.

The suspect – identified as Payton Gendron of Conklin, New York – had been arraigned on a charge of first-degree murder, which carries a sentence of life without parole. He is being held without bail.

Byron Brown, the mayor of Buffalo – which is located in western New York State, along the U.S. border with Canada – said the shooter "traveled hours from outside this community to perpetrate this crime."

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said U.S. President Joe Biden had been briefed on the "horrific shooting."

In a statement, Mr. Biden thanked police and first responders and denounced the attack.

Finland, Sweden inch closer to becoming part of NATO

Bloc chief expects the joining process to be very quick

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BERLIN

Finland's government declared a "new era" is underway as it inches closer to seeking NATO membership, hours before Sweden's governing party on Sunday backed a plan to join the trans-Atlantic alliance amid Russia's war in Ukraine.

Russia has long bristled about NATO moving closer to its borders, so the developments will be sure to further anger Moscow.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Sunday the process for Finland and Sweden to join could be very quick. He also didn't expect Turkey to hold up the process.

Speaking after top diplomats from the alliance's 30 member states met in Berlin, Mr. Stoltenberg also expressed his hope that Ukraine could win the war as Russian military advances appear to be faltering.

Unyielding strength: Sanna Marin, left, and Sauli Niinistö at a press conference in Helsinki, Finland, on Sunday. • AFP

In Finland, President Sauli Niinisto and Prime Minister Sanna Marin confirmed earlier statements that their country would seek membership in NATO during a joint news conference at the Presidential Palace in Helsinki. The Nordic country, which was nonaligned before changing its stance on NATO, shares a long border with Russia.

The Finnish Parliament is expected to endorse the decision in the coming days. A formal membership application will then be submitted to NATO headquarters in Brussels, most likely at some point next week.

Sweden, also nonaligned, moved a step closer to applying for NATO membership after the governing Social Democratic party met on Sunday and backed the decision. The plan to join the alliance will be discussed in Sweden's parliament on Monday, and Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson's Cabinet will make an announcement later that day.

In targeted attack, two Sikh traders shot dead in Pakistan

MEA registers protest, Prime Minister Sharif vows action

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PESHAWAR

Two Sikh businessmen were shot dead on Sunday by unidentified gunmen in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, in the latest targeted terrorist attack against the minority community in the restive province bordering Afghanistan.

Saljeet Singh, 42, and Ranjeet Singh, 38, died on the spot after being attacked by two bike-borne assailants in the morning, according to the police.

The attackers fled after carrying out the attack.

The two Sikhs were in the business of spices and had shops in the Bata Tal bazaar in Sarband, about 17 km from Peshawar.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the killing.

The Counter-Terrorism Department registered a case of murder of the two Sikh men, Saddar Superintendent of Police Aqiq Hussain told *Geo News*.

"The incident appears to be a terrorist attack. The CCTV footage will be acquired and the suspects will

Mourners gather around the body of a Sikh shot dead in Peshawar on Sunday.

be arrested soon," he said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the incident and directed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan to ensure immediate arrest and punishment of the culprits.

He also urged the Chief Minister to ensure steps for the protection of the lives and properties of the citizens, particularly of non-Muslims.

Mr. Sharif expressed sympathies with the bereaved families of the deceased.

He observed that enmity with Pakistan was the reason behind this "act of terrorism" and resolved to eliminate the enemies of the country, the report said.

India on Sunday asked Pakistan to sincerely investigate the "brutal" killing of the two Sikh traders and take strict action against those responsible for the "shocking" and "deplorable" incident.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India has registered its "strong protest" with Pakistan on the continued "targeting" of members of the minority community in that country.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann urged the External Affairs Ministry to raise with the neighbouring country the issue of the safety of minority community members living there.

Making a similar demand, former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh alleged that the Pakistan government was only doing lip service to Sikhs, while Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal and the apex gurudwara body, SGPC, said justice should be ensured to the bereaved families.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan condemned the killing.

Sri Lanka to investigate reports on LTTE regrouping

The country is in the grip of a crippling economic crisis and political uncertainty

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on May 15 said it will "duly investigate" the information flagged by Indian intelligence agencies – that ex-LTTE were "regrouping to launch attacks" in the island – and "strengthen security", a day after authorities denied the claim reported in *The Hindu*.

On May 13 *The Hindu*, citing Indian intelligence sources, reported that "some erstwhile cadre" had entered Tamil Nadu to "plan and execute" attacks in Sri Lanka that is in the grips of a crippling economic crisis and political uncertainty. The attacks were being timed with the 'Mullivaikkal anniversary', sources had indicated. They were referring to the civil war anniversary marked by Sri Lanka's Tamils on May 18 every year, to remember the tens of thousands of Tamil civilians who were killed during the final stages of Sri Lanka's civil war in May 2009, when Sri Lankan forces crushed the LTTE.

Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defence on May 14 denied the claims, calling the report "baseless". "We have received no intelligence warning of such a security threat," the Ministry spokesman had told *The Hindu*.

The Hindu report did not mention that India had warned Sri Lanka about the security threat. The report highlighted Indian intelligence inputs and advisory shared internally, acting on which Tamil Nadu had stepped up coastal surveillance.

On May 15, the Ministry said in a statement that upon inquiry, "the Indian intelligence services have informed Sri Lanka that the information has been given as general information and further informed that the investigations will be carried out in this regard and action will be taken to inform Sri Lanka about it."

Meanwhile, over the last few days several Tamils, including families of forcibly disappeared persons, have been gathering at Mullivaikkal, located in the north-eastern tip of the island, and known for the mass killings of civilians, to observe "remembrance week". Locals pointed to heightened military presence.

War-affected Tamils have repeatedly raised concern over being denied their right to memorialise their loved ones who died during the war. Last year, authorities bulldozed a memorial for war victims placed inside the University of Jaffna. In another instance ahead of the war anniversary last year, a memorial plaque, and some monuments, were found vandalised.

Six killed in suicide blast in Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PESHAWAR

Three children and as many soldiers of the Pakistan Army were killed in a suicide blast on Sunday in Pakistan's restive North Waziristan tribal district bordering Afghanistan, the Army said.

The incident occurred in the Miran Shah town, some 250 km from here, the Army's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. The children were aged between 4 to 11 years, it said, adding that three soldiers also died in the incident.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the suicide attack and expressed grief over the lives lost.

Palestinians' annual rally to mourn Israel's creation

Journalist's killing heightens tensions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JERUSALEM

Palestinians rallied on Sunday to mark the "Nakba," or catastrophe, 74 years after Israel's creation, with condemnation spreading over a police raid on the funeral of a slain journalist.

The annual demonstrations across the occupied West Bank, annexed east Jerusalem and inside Israel came with tensions high over the killing of 51-year-old Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh.

The Palestinian-American was shot dead on Wednesday during an Israeli raid in Jenin, a West Bank flashpoint. A Palestinian militant wounded in clashes there, Daoud al-Zubaidi, died from his injuries in an Israeli hospital Sunday.

Israeli police have vowed to investigate the chaos that marred the day of Abu Akleh's funeral, after television footage showed pallbearers struggling to stop the casket from toppling to the ground as police descended upon them.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Sunday called for a "credible" investigation into Abu Akleh's death as he offered condolences to her family.

Palestinians rallying in front of the UNSCO offices in Gaza City on Sunday.

Late South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu's foundation said Israeli police "attacking pallbearers" was "chillingly reminiscent of the brutality" seen at the funerals of anti-apartheid activists.

Thousands of Palestinians streamed through central Ramallah for the main Nakba rally, with crowds also turning out in Gaza City. At a student Nakba event at Tel Aviv University (TAU), police said three Arabs were arrested "for attacking demonstrators and police officers." The arrests followed a confrontation with Im Tirtzu, a right-wing Israeli movement holding a counter rally.

N. Korea reports 15 more suspected COVID deaths

Media reports close to 3 lakh cases

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL

North Korea has confirmed 15 more deaths and hundreds of thousands of additional patients with fevers as it mobilises more than a million health and other workers to try to suppress the country's first COVID-19 outbreak, state media reported on Sunday.

After maintaining a widely disputed claim that it's been coronavirus-free for more than two years, North Korea announced on Thursday that it had found its first COVID-19 patients since the pandemic began.

The additional deaths reported on Sunday took the country's reported fever-related fatalities to 42. The official *Korean Central News Agency* also reported that another 2,96,180 people with fevers had been tallied, taking the reported total to 8,20,620.

KCNA said on Sunday that more than 1.3 million people have been engaged in works to examine and treat sick people and raise public awareness of hygiene. It said everyone with fevers and others with abnormal symptoms was being put in quarantine and treated. *KCNA* said the elevated pandemic response includes the establishment of more quarantine facilities, the urgent transportation of medical supplies to hospitals and increased disinfection efforts.

Of those with symptoms, 4,96,030 have recovered, while as of Saturday 3,24,550 were still receiving treatment, *KCNA* reported.

State media reports said Mr. Kim and other senior North Korean officials are donating their private reserve medicines to support the country's anti-pandemic fight.

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ASK US

N. SREE KANTH

Q. 1. I pre-closed a Post Office 5-year time deposit (principal: ₹5 lakh) during the third year (June 2021). As the deposit was pre-closed, a sum of about ₹27,000 was deducted from principal as penalty. Can this ₹27,000 be shown as a loss when filing I-T for FY22? Also, do I have to show the principal as my income during I-T filing for FY22? If so, under which section should this shown? Please advise.
2. I purchased an individual health insurance policy for ₹10 lakh for the period March 2020-March 2021. As the premium was paid in March 2020, the 80D benefit was only applicable for FY20 and not FY21. This has been the case every year when I renew my policy. Could you please advise what should be done to make the deduction benefit come under the respective financial year instead of the previous year?
3. I opened a ULIP in 2018 and have paid four premiums till date. If I discontinue my final-year premium and receive the leftover amount in the sixth year, do I have to consider it as income and show during I-T filing? Please advise.
4. I am paying premium for an endowment policy for the past 11 years. If I pre-close/surrender this policy and receive the final amount, what are the tax implications for me? Please advise.

SETHURAMAN

A. 1) Penalty on pre-closure of time deposits cannot be set off against any other income. ₹4.73 lakh is not an income and it is not required to be disclosed in your ITR. Only the interest earned/accrued on the deposit is taxable under the head "Income from Other Sources".

2) Deduction of health insurance premium paid can be availed only in that year when the payment is made wherein such payment is made in respect to keep the health insurance in force.

3&4) As per Section 10(10D) of the Income Tax Act, 1961, any sum received under a life insurance policy, including bonus is exempt. You are to note that this exemption is available only if the premium paid is lesser than 10% of the sum assured if the policy is taken on or after April 1, 2012 and in the case of policies dated between April 1, 2003 and March 31, 2012, the policy paid amount is to be lesser than 20% of the sum assured. Insurance Companies are required to deduct TDS only if the amount so paid is not covered under Section 10(10D) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 and when such amount exceeds ₹1,00,000.

Q. I am working in the private sector and my wife is a homemaker. I have made mutual fund investments and occasionally buy/sell shares (no intraday trading) in her name. She does not have any other income apart from the capital gains that accrue through the sale of mutual funds and shares. Should I pay the 15% short-term capital gains tax and 10% long term capital gains tax (greater than ₹1 lakh) or could I show it as "other sources of income" whereby I can pay the tax as per the income tax slab. Since my wife does not have any other income, tax would be lesser or nil if I pay by income tax slab. Could you please advise on the best way to pay the tax according to the law?

PRASANNA

A. It is assumed that the funds used to invest in equity shares and mutual funds belong to your wife and is not gifted by you. In such a case, sale of listed equity shares and equity oriented mutual funds are taxed only under 'Capital Gains' and cannot disclosed under 'Income from Other Sources'. As there is no other income, the capital gains can be reduced to the extent of unutilised basic exemption limit. Further, if the total capital gains do not exceed the basic exemption limit, there is no incidence of tax.

In case the equity shares and mutual funds are invested through funds transferred by you to your wife, as a gift (without adequate consideration), then the profits/incomes accruing from such equity shares and mutual funds are to be clubbed in your hands and the same will be taxable at the respective rates in your hands.

Q. I am an individual income taxpayer. I have opened a post office SS Account (Sukanya scheme) in my minor daughter's name. I am the natural guardian and it is mentioned in the pass book. This is a tax-free account. Do I have to show the yearly interest that accrues in that account in my yearly tax returns? And every year, will I have to show the total balance of that account in my income tax returns?

NATARAJAN

A. Interest accrued on Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY) is exempt. You can disclose the same in exempted income of the minor child in your respective ITR under exempt income of minors. In our opinion, deposit amount is not required to be disclosed in your respective ITR.

(N. Sree Kanth is partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

Readers can e-mail queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. The experts on personal finance will answer select queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

RBI throws a bash for fixed income investors

With the repo rate increase, investors can expect a better deal as the Reserve Bank has reversed the trend of rock-bottom interest rates

AARATI KRISHNAN

The Reserve Bank of India's decision earlier this month to convene a surprise meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee and increase its repo rate from 4% to 4.4% triggered turmoil in the stock markets. But this is good news for fixed income investors.

It shows that RBI and the MPC are finally willing to reverse their three-year old policy of keeping interest rates at rock-bottom levels to help businesses and borrowers survive the pandemic. Savers and investors can look forward to a better deal on their fixed income investments in the year ahead.

With the upcycle just beginning, interest rates in India may still have a long way to go. Before it declined to the multi-decade low of 4%, India's repo rate used to be at 6% in 2018. It even went as high as 8% in 2014-15. Right now, with RBI walking a tightrope between inflation and growth, market experts believe that repo rates could move up by another 75-100 basis points (bps) over the next one year to 5.15-5.4%. Though it is the official policy rate, the repo rate by itself has little relevance to savers or investors. It is simply the rate at which banks borrow short-term money from RBI whenever they need liquidity.

So, if you're a fixed income investor, it's more useful to know what has been happening and what is likely to happen to interest rates on the investment options you use regularly, so that you can make appropriate choices. Here goes:

Bank FDs

Though RBI's repo rate moves are supposed to send out signals for banks to follow, bank fixed deposit (FD) rates are usually quite slow to respond to RBI moves, especially when there is an increasing trend.

So, despite all the action on market interest rates in the last one year, SBI's FD rate for one to two years for instance, has barely moved from 5% in January 2021 to 5.1% now (last revised in February 2022). FD rates for 2-3 year tenures have risen from 5.1% to 5.2% and those for 3-5 year tenures from 5.3% to 5.45%.

Private sector banks such as IndusInd offer a slightly better deal on rates at 6-6.5% for terms from 1 to 5 years and small finance banks such as Equitas offer 6.1-6.75% for similar terms.

But bank FD rates today compare quite poorly to market interest rates and are quite likely to be revised upwards in the next one year. If you are a bank FD investor, it makes sense to stick to the lowest possible tenures right now, say six months to a year. This can help you move on to far better rates when banks decide to catch up with the RBI and the markets.

Post-office schemes

The interest rates on post office schemes such as Post Office Time Deposits, Monthly Income Account, National Savings Certificates (NSC), Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS) and PPF are reset every quarter by the government.

For the current April-June quarter of 2022, post office time deposits offer 5.5% for 1 to 3 years and 6.7% for 5 years. The Monthly Income Account offers 6.6% and the NSC, 6.8%. SCSS offers 7.4% while PPF is at 7.1%.

All of these rates are better than comparable rates for bank FDs. The rates on post office instruments are supposed to be linked to market yields on government securities of different tenures.

Therefore, given that market yields on government bonds have gone up sharply in the last six months, the rates on post office schemes are overdue for upward revision.

But in order to shield savers from the very sharp fall in market interest rates, the government had not reduced the rates on these schemes for the last two years. When rates on post office schemes are raised, it increases the government's borrowing costs because the proceeds of these schemes are used by the Centre.

Therefore, you can expect interest rates on post office schemes to be raised in the next one year, if the rate upcycle continues. However, the hikes may not materialise immediately. If you are looking to invest in post office schemes, avoid the long-term schemes that lock in your money for five years plus such as the Monthly Income Account, NSC, SCSS and so on; it is best to postpone your investment for a quarter or two until better rates kick in.

If you are looking to invest in pension or annuity schemes, it would be best to put off the investment in the expectation of better rates.

Government bonds

With the RBI recently allowing investors to open RBI Retail Direct Gilt accounts, ordinary investors have the opportunity to participate directly in government bond auctions. The good news for retail investors is that yields in the government bond market tend to be very quick to respond to inflation and other market cues. In fact, in the last one year, yields on these bonds have run up much ahead of bank FDs and post office schemes. The accompanying table shows that after rising by 130 to 200 basis points, current yields on the one-year government security (gilt) trade at 5.77%, 3-year gilt at 6.92%, 5-year at 7.27% and the 10-year at 7.47%. These are very attractive rates for the safest bonds in the market, which are centrally guaranteed. Regular-income seekers can invest in these auctions if they are willing to lock in their money until the maturity of these bonds. Here too, it would be safer to invest in the 1-5 year bonds to begin with, and move on to longer-term bonds as rates move up further.

Mutual funds

Mutual funds, unlike the above instruments, deliver returns both from the interest received on bonds they own and gains on bond prices. Most debt funds outperform other options when rates fall. But as interest rates increase, declines in bond prices cause NAV losses in debt mutual funds. The longer the term of the bonds the debt fund owns, the more the dent to the NAV.

Therefore, investors in mutual funds today would be better off sticking to debt funds that invest in very short-term bonds of less than a year. Ultra-short duration, low duration funds and floating rate funds are the better options.

How market rates have moved

% per annum	Current *	1 month ago	1 year ago
Repo rate	4.40	4.00	4.00
1-year gilt	5.77	4.85	3.92
3-year gilt	6.92	6.02	4.93
5-year gilt	7.27	6.54	5.70
10-year gilt	7.47	7.14	6.16
1-year Commercial Paper	6.25	5.35	4.45
1-year AAA corporate bond	6.23	5.15	4.15

*AS ON MAY 9, 2022

COVER NOTE: POLICY PERILS

Trust, but verify before you opt for a group insurance cover

There are risks of either a sudden increase in the insurance cost or the service provider stopping it

K. NITYA KALYANI

Go online, we are told. Automate your investments, premium payments, bill payments. Life is easier and things get done. Until they don't.

We saw in earlier columns of Cover Note some of the issues group insurance policies are prone to. Typical cases have been of banks offering group health cover to their account holders and then deciding to quit this activity. Or they may have undergone a merger and priorities have changed in their corporate office.

Variants of this model are group policies offered by other commercial entities or institutions, including clubs and associations you belong to. They can be personal accident, life or pension covers, and are offered to you because you are a savings bank account holder, credit card holder, pensioner, alumni association member, entertainment club member and so on.

There is no restriction on group policies from the insurance regulation point of view except that the group should not be formed for the purpose of purchasing insurance.

Group policies have significant advantages. Signing up for them is easy. The offerings are already negotiated and there are simple select options to pick from. Similarly, renewals are easy as well. There is a comfort in numbers and you may know other members personally, depending on the nature of the group. There is an interface for claims in the form of the administrator of the group policy and they talk to the TPA to get your things done.

The premium rates are significantly cheaper.

One-size-fits-all approach

Coming to the disadvantages, the policies are one-size-fits-all. Yet they are highly recommended if you are unable or unwilling to buy an individual cover.

But otherwise, you lose out on a potentially better cover more suited to your specific situation and needs. There is a risk, as seen above, of the service provider stopping this service and that has left quite a few uncovered and unable to buy insurance to continue.

This specifically affects the older population and their health insurance as insurers make more prudent underwriting decisions when it comes to covering this segment.

Look before you leap: Disclaimers that are convenient only to intermediaries have to be discarded. • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The other shock that those insured under group policy face in such situations is a sudden increase in their insurance cost. Group policy versus individual policy premium rates are one factor; the other is, the individuals are now older and attract higher slab rates.

Add to this the fact that health insurance and life insurance rates are seeing substantial premium increases because of COVID claims costs to the insurance firms and inflation in healthcare costs. Apart from this, there are administrative and logistical traps to look out for. One such emerged in a conversation with a family friend.

The lady had retired as a bank officer and opted for a group health insurance policy through her pensioners' association. Renewal terms and rates were shared and the association that was handling it asked for standing instructions to debit the premium on the due date. She sent an email authorising the debit and this was duly acknowledged. Having done the needful, she went back to to doing what pensioners do, and very rightly so.

The debit, however, did not take place, and neither did her renewal. As she was otherwise preoccupied to track her bank account, it all came to light after it was too late.

Now, her policy is not renewed and there is a break in coverage – both vexing situations. When she pursued the matter, her bank pensioners' association / bank where she had given standing instructions (the same bank, her former employer) are both washing their hands of the responsibility for the debit that did not take place and pointing her to the appropriate disclaimers that emphasise that the burden of due diligence was always hers.

The former is a service organisation and the latter is supported to the hilt by technology that should ensure such a miss can never happen!

The insurance company is not yet in the picture to even say anything because, with no premium received, it is legally not on risk as per The Insurance Act. This is not an isolated incident. Solutions are not perfect and certainly not easy.

Logic and fair-play suggest that the association, and the bank following it, should be held accountable for restoring her coverage and footing her claims if any until that happens.

The member is hesitant to take a hard stand, but somebody should start doing just that. Both the pensioners' association and the bank are services against payment and so, would this come under the Consumer Protection Act? Or would a consumer court see bad faith in this disclaimer? Either way, is the only way to be sure your premium is reaching its destination is to stand in a queue with cash and come away with a signed, stamped receipt? These convenient disclaimers have to be given a hard look and discarded.

In insurance, there is a clause that says the insured has to conduct himself as a prudent uninsured. That is, even if he has an insurance policy, he should take all the measures to safeguard against losses as he would if he had no insurance. This underlines both loss minimisation as well as good intent.

Similarly, until there is some certainty that such gaps won't swallow up your insurance coverage, check that debit and ensure your premium has indeed reached its intended destination. Trust, but verify.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Bank fixed deposit rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure
SMALL FINANCE BANKS				
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	7.25	6.90	6.75	6.75
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.50	7.00	6.75
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.50	6.50	6.25
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.50	6.75	6.75
Equitas Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.10	6.50	6.00
Fincare Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.00	6.50	6.75
ESAF Small Finance Bank	6.75	5.50	5.75	5.25
AU Small Finance Bank	6.75	5.25	6.75	6.75
Capital Small Finance Bank	6.30	6.00	6.00	6.00
PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS				
DCB Bank	6.25	5.55	6.25	6.25
RBL Bank	6.50	6.25	6.30	6.30
SBM Bank India	6.60	6.00	5.85	5.85
IndusInd Bank	6.50	6.00	6.50	6.50
Nainital Bank	5.35	5.10	5.35	5.35
IDFC First Bank	6.25	5.75	6.00	6.25
Karur Vysya Bank	5.80	5.40	5.65	5.80
CSB Bank	5.50	5.00	5.25	5.25
Axis Bank	5.75	5.10	5.40	5.75
South Indian Bank	5.65	4.90	5.40	5.65
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	5.35	5.25	5.00	5.00
Karnataka Bank	5.50	5.10	5.40	5.40
Dhanlaxmi Bank	5.50	5.15	5.30	5.40
Bandhan Bank	6.25	5.75	6.25	5.60
HDFC Bank	5.60	5.10	5.20	5.45
ICICI Bank	5.60	5.00	5.20	5.45
DBS Bank	5.75	5.10	5.65	5.75
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	5.50	5.20	5.45	5.50
PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS				
Union Bank of India	5.50	5.00	5.30	5.40
Canara Bank	5.75	5.30	5.70	5.75
State Bank of India	5.50	5.10	5.45	5.50
Punjab & Sind Bank	5.40	5.15	5.40	5.40
Indian Bank	5.25	5.00	5.20	5.25
Bank of Baroda	5.35	5.00	5.20	5.35
Punjab National Bank	5.25	5.10	5.10	5.25
Indian Overseas Bank	5.45	5.15	5.45	5.45
Bank of India	5.20	5.00	5.20	5.20
Bank of Maharashtra	5.00	5.00	4.90	4.90
FOREIGN BANKS				
Deutsche Bank	7.00	5.25	5.75	7.00
HSBC Bank	4.00	3.10	4.00	4.00
Citibank	3.50	2.75	3.50	3.50

Home loan interest rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
	(in %)		
PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS			
State Bank of India	6.65-7.65	6.65-7.65	6.65-7.65
Bank of Baroda	6.90-8.40	6.90-8.40	6.90-8.65
Union Bank of India	6.90-8.65	6.90-8.85	6.90-8.85
Punjab National Bank	6.95-8.35	6.90-8.05	6.90-8.00
Bank of India	6.90-8.75	6.90-8.75	6.90-8.75
Canara Bank	7.05-11.85	7.05-11.85	7.05-11.85
UCO Bank	6.50-7.00	6.50-7.00	6.50-7.00
Bank of Maharashtra	6.80-8.70	6.80-8.85	6.80-8.95
Punjab and Sind Bank	6.90-8.00	6.90-8.00	6.90-8.00
Indian Overseas Bank	7.05-7.40	7.15-7.40	7.30-7.40
PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	>=7.00	>=7.00	>=7.00
ICICI Bank	7.10-7.95	7.10-7.95	7.10-7.95
Axis Bank	7.00-11.90	7.00-11.90	7.00-11.90
HSBC Bank	6.45-7.05	6.45-7.05	6.45-7.05
South Indian Bank	7.35-10.10	7.35-10.10	7.35-10.10
Karur Vysya Bank	7.15-9.35	7.15-9.35	7.15-9.35
Karnataka Bank	7.50-8.75	7.50-8.75	7.50-8.85

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(in %)
Federal Bank	8.05-8.10	8.10-8.15	8.15-8.20
Dhanlaxmi Bank	7.85-9.00	7.85-9.00	7.85-9.00
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	8.25	8.25	8.25
Bandhan Bank	6.40-13.50	6.40-11.75	6.40-11.75
RBL Bank	9.40-11.10	7.80-8.20	7.80-8.10
CSB Bank	8.30	8.30	8.63
HOUSING FINANCE COMPANIES (HFCS)			
LIC Housing Finance	6.70-7.85	6.70-8.05	6.70-8.05
HDFC Ltd	7.00-8.45	7.00-8.60	7.00-8.70
Bajaj Housing Finance	6.65 onwards	6.65 onwards	6.65 onwards
Tata Capital	>=6.85	>=6.85	>=6.85
PNB Housing Finance	6.75-12.00	6.75-12.00	6.90-9.75
GIC Housing Finance	>=7.24	>=7.24	>=7.24
Repco Home Finance	>=7.15	>=7.15	>=7.15
Indiabulls Housing	>=7.60	>=7.60	>=7.60
Aditya Birla Capital	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50
ICICI Home Finance	>=9.20	>=9.20	>=9.20
Godrej Housing Finance	6.94-9.99	6.94-9.99	6.94-9.99
Home First Finance	8.00-18.00	8.00-18.00	8.00-18.00

Rates as on May 11, Source: Paisabazaar.com

The warriors: Lakshya delivered when it mattered most, the redoubtable pair of Satwiksairaj and Chirag showed their mettle, and Srikanth was steady and assured in creating the glorious victory. •BADMINTONPHOTO/COURTESY OF BWF

India demolishes Indonesia, scripts history in golden letters

Lakshya, Srikanth and Satwik-Chirag pair pull off an incredible maiden title triumph with a 3-0 win over the 14-time champion

THOMAS CUP

REUTERS
BANGKOK

India's men's badminton team pulled off a major upset by crushing 14-time champion Indonesia 3-0 in the final on Sunday to win its maiden Thomas Cup title.

Lakshya Sen set the tone for the first-time finalists when he stunned Olympic bronze medallist Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in the first singles.

Resilience

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy combined with Chirag Shetty for a similar come-from-behind victory over Mohammad Ahsan and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo in the first doubles.

K. Srikanth tamed Jonatan Christie 21-15, 23-21 in the second singles as India became only the sixth nation to win the coveted trophy.

After a 48-minute slugfest, Srikanth leapt to drill a cross-court smash to Christie's left.

The importance of his win was not lost on the 29-year-old who dropped his racket and let out a roar before being mobbed by his teammates who invaded the court.

India proved its knockout stage victories over five-time champion Malaysia and 2016 winner Denmark were no fluke as it produced another courageous display against the badminton powerhouse.

Great fight

Lakshya typified that fight in his 8-21, 21-17, 21-16 victory against Ginting.

The 20-year-old was outplayed in the first game but he won the second and overcame a 7-11 deficit in the decider to prevail.

The first doubles match followed a similar script with Satwik and Chirag losing the first game.

They saved four match-points in the second to roar back and prevailed 18-21, 23-21, 21-19.

Srikanth kept it simple by winning the first game in 19 minutes.

Christie put up more resistance in the second game but Srikanth's reflexes at the net and calculated aggression ensured India won the final without dropping a match.

PM's congratulations

The victory sparked celebration back home with Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading the tributes.

"The Indian badminton team has scripted history! The entire nation is elated by India winning the Thomas Cup..." tweeted the Prime Minister.

Cash rewards

The Sports Minister Anurag Thakur, while congratulating the squad, announced a cash award of ₹1 crore for the victorious team.

The Badminton Association of India (BAI) president Himanta Biswa Sarma also announced a reward of ₹1 crore for the winning squad. Sarma also announced an award of ₹20 lakh for the support staff.

The results:

India bt Indonesia 3-0

[Lakshya Sen bt Anthony Sinisuka Ginting 8-21, 21-17, 21-16; Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty bt Mohammad Ahsan & Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo 18-21, 23-21, 21-19; K. Srikanth bt Jonatan Christie 21-15, 23-21].

Satwiksairaj-Chirag pair most valuable: Padukone

Legend feels they made a big difference

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

Chirag and Satwik... fantastic duo.

Badminton stalwart Prakash Padukone was elated to see the Indian team create history on Sunday.

Padukone stated that the doubles team, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, played a big role in India lifting the Thomas Cup title.

The 66-year-old was part of the team which recorded India's previous best performance at the tournament – a semifinal finish in 1979.

"We have now truly arrived on the big scene. While each player has contributed to the success of the team, in my opinion, the most valuable players were our first doubles pair of Satwiksairaj and Chirag Shetty. They made a big difference to the balance of the team by winning the crucial first doubles, which was always our weak link," Padukone said.

"Their victories against Malaysia, Denmark and Indonesia helped to lessen the burden on our singles players. This is not to take away the glory from our singles players in any way, since all of them delivered when it mattered the most.

"In my opinion, for the first time, every player played to his potential, which is largely responsible for this superb victory," Padukone said.

Huge win, says Gopi

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

Chief National coach P. Gopi Chand believes that India's historic win over Indonesia in the Thomas Cup final can be compared with India's triumph in the 1983 cricket World Cup.

"This is a huge victory for Indian badminton and personally for me also," Gopi told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

"Every time people try to put me down, God has given me something really special. Something to be really proud of," Gopi said. "To beat top guns like Malaysia, Denmark and Indonesia is not a joke. It speaks volumes of the kind of effort the players put in. It is a complete team effort and obvious that they pushed each other to the hilt under pressure. I believe this victory will propel Indian badminton to a new high."

"I must thank BAI for the support it extended consistently to ensure that these kind of results are there to see," he added.

Lavish praise for team

Jubilation: The Indian team savours the wonderful moment. •BADMINTONPHOTO/COURTESY OF BWF

AGENCIES

The sporting world tweeted words of praise and extended congratulations to the victorious team...

Sachin Tendukar: Historic moment for all Indians! What a day for Indian Badminton. Congratulations to whole team on winning our maiden #ThomasCup title.

Abhinav Bindra: What a historic day! An incredible achievement by an incredible Team India... Bounced back from tough situations on numerous occasions to win Gold. Kudos to all the players and coaches. Champions, all of you!

Sunil Chhetri: What a moment for Indian sport...we beat the best to make it happen. Congrats to the players and staff. Some things take time, but don't let anyone tell you it can't be done.

Virat Kohli: Historic achievement. A massive moment for Indian badminton.

Saina Nehwal: Congratulations TEAM INDIA Men's Team for winning the THOMAS CUP Title ... Great win.

V.V.S. Laxman: We've had individual champions but winning as a team and a first-ever title in #ThomasCup is surreal. Kudos to each and everyone.

Viren Rasquinha: Thomas Cup Champions 2022 - INDIA. Created history. First time ever. One of the most momentous day in Indian sport.

'The greatest victory of all time'

Vimal underlines the reason for Prannoy's selection

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Vimal Kumar has seen it all in Indian badminton.

As a player, he saw the golden years of Prakash Padukone and Syed Modi. He was a regular member of the Indian Thomas Cup team campaigns from 1981 to 1991 in his international career spanning 15 straight years. From 2000, he has regularly accompanied the Indian teams.

Accompanying the victorious team as manager, Vimal called it "the greatest" and elaborated.

Very different

"We had Prakash Padukone winning the All England (in 1980) and then Gopi Chand (in 2001). Saina Nehwal and K. Srikkanth became World No. 1, P. V. Sindhu won the World title (in 2019) but to win the biggest team title in the game is something very different. I can't explain the feeling, the joy.

Vimal praised Lakshya Sen for his display despite suffering from food-poisoning before he left for Bangkok. A National selector, Vimal underlined H.S. Prannoy's role in the deciders against Malaysia (in the quarterfinals) and Denmark (in the semifinals) and explained his selection.

Prannoy... fabulous show. • BADMINTONPHOTO/COURTESY OF BWF

"We chose Prannoy because he has some very impressive victories this season, including one over World No. 1 and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in November. I'm so happy Prannoy justified his selection.

Thanks for the support

Prannoy, on his part, said, "I'm thankful to those who supported me. I've always performed well under pressure. I'm proud of this type of team. I've done justice to my selection."

Chirag Shetty, brilliant in the doubles match in the company of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, said, "We had this belief of doing well in the competition. We were there to contend because we felt we had the team to win. Once we return from dinner, we will dance, like we do after every victory."

Srikanth, whose unbeaten streak in six matches was the pillar on which India's campaign rested, said "Today is a special day. We don't get to play as a team much. To be in the Thomas Cup final and win, makes it special. And the feeling will take time to sink in."

TODAY'S MATCH

PUNJAB KINGS vs. DELHI CAPITALS

DY PATIL, 7.30 P.M.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 29

PBKS 15 | DC 14

PREVIOUS MEETING

DC won by nine wickets, 2022

STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD)

Saha helps Titans tower over CSK

IPL 2022

AYAN ACHARYA
MUMBAI

Gujarat Titans made light work of its 134-run chase against Chennai Super Kings at the Wankhede Stadium to reaffirm its IPL 2022 title-winning credentials on Sunday. Titans have also assured themselves of a top-two finish.

Batting first, Chennai Super Kings did not score any boundaries in its first four overs as well as at the death. Wriddhiman Saha (67, 57b, 8x4, 1x6) collected six in the first 18 balls of the chase. He got a reprieve in the third over when Ruturaj Gaikwad dropped a simple catch at backward point. But if Super Kings' innings lacked momentum, Saha and Shubman Gill ensured Titans' had it aplenty as they raced to 53 in the PowerPlay.

Matheesha Pathirana (2/24), with his uncanny slinging action, struck with his first ball in the IPL when he trapped Gill in front.

Matthew Wade and Hardik Pandya fell shortly after but Saha, in the company of David Miller, saw Titans home with seven wickets to spare.

Earlier, Mohammed Shami's (2/19) first two overs had the same artistry as a skilful spell in a Test match.

Only Gaikwad (53, 49b, 4x4, 1x6) and N. Jagadeesan (39, 33b, 3x4, 1x6) made useful contributions as CSK struggled to 133 for five in 20 overs.

Next assignment

GT: May 19 vs. **RCB**
Wankhede, 7.30 p.m.

CSK: May 20 vs. **RR**
Brabourne, 7.30 p.m.

POINTS TABLE

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Gujarat Titans (Q)	13	10	3	20	0.391
Rajasthan Royals	13	8	5	16	0.304
Lucknow Super Giants	13	8	5	16	0.262
Royal Challengers Bangalore	13	7	6	14	-0.323
Delhi Capitals	12	6	6	12	0.210
Kolkata Knight Riders	13	6	7	12	0.160
Punjab Kings	12	6	6	12	0.023
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	5	7	10	-0.270
Chennai Super Kings (E)	13	4	9	8	-0.206
Mumbai Indians (E)	12	3	9	6	-0.613

AFTER THE LSG-RR MATCH ON MAY 15 — Q: QUALIFIED; E: ELIMINATED

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Ruturaj Gaikwad c Wade b Rashid 53 *(49b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Devon Conway c Saha b Shami 5 *(9b)*, Moeen Ali c Rashid b Sai Kishore 21 *(17b, 2x6)*, N. Jagadeesan (not out) 39 *(33b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Shivam Dube c Saha b Joseph 0 *(2b)*, M.S. Dhoni c Dayal b Shami 7 *(10b)*, Mitchell Santner (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-2, w-4, nb-1): 7; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 133.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-8 (Conway, 2.1 overs), 2-65 (Moeen, 8.4), 3-113 (Ruturaj, 15.6), 4-114 (Dube, 16.3), 5-130 (Dhoni, 19.3).

GUJARAT TITANS BOWLING

Shami 4-0-19-2, Hardik 2-0-8-0, Dayal 3-0-27-0, Rashid 4-0-31-1, Joseph 3-0-15-1, Sai Kishore 4-0-31-1.

GUJARAT TITANS

Wriddhiman Saha (not out) 67 *(57b, 8x4, 1x6)*, Shubman Gill lbw b Pathirana 18 *(17b, 3x4)*, Matthew Wade c Dube b Moeen 20 *(15b, 2x4)*, Hardik Pandya c Dube b Pathirana 7 *(6b, 1x4)*, David Miller (not out) 15 *(20b, 1x4)*; Extras (b-4, lb-2, w-4): 10; Total (for three wkts. in 19.1 overs): 137.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-59 (Gill, 7.1), 2-90 (Wade, 11.2), 3-100 (Hardik, 13.1).

SUPER KINGS BOWLING

Mukesh 3-0-28-0, Simarjeet 3-0-26-0, Santner 4-0-24-0, Solanki 4-0-18-0, Pathirana 3.1-0-24-2, Moeen 2-0-11-1.

Toss: CSK. **MoM:** Saha.
Titans won by seven wickets.

Boult, Jaiswal shine as RR surges ahead

SHAYAN ACHARYA
MUMBAI

After a series of forgettable outings, Trent Boult rose to the occasion when it mattered. The New Zealand quick rediscovered his touch, picked up a couple of wickets and guided Rajasthan Royals to a 24-run win against Lucknow Super Giants in an Indian Premier League fixture at the Brabourne Stadium on Sunday.

Having lost three of its last four matches, it was a must-win game for the Royals and after Yashasvi Jaiswal (41, 29b, 6x4, 1x6) and Devdutt Padikkal's 39 (18b, 5x4, 2x6) guided Royals to 178 for six, Boult removed Quinton de Kock and Aysuh Badoni in 2.2 overs, with just 15 runs on the board.

Boult. •SPORTZPICS/IPL

The onus was on captain K.L. Rahul, but Prasidh Krishna cut short his stay at the crease, tempting him to offer a catch to Jaiswal at point.

Deepak Hooda (59,39b, 5x4, 2x6) and Krunal Pandya rebuilt the innings, adding 65 runs before R. Ashwin struck, nailing Krunal.

Hooda was soon stumped by Sanju Samson off Yuzvendra Chahal, and Obed McCoy tightened the noose, picking up a couple of wickets and restricting Super Giants to 154 for eight.

Earlier, opting to bat, Royals lost its opener Jos Buttler for just two runs. But Jaiswal and Sanju added 64 runs for the second wicket. Jaiswal tore apart Dushmantha Chameera, hitting three fours and a six in the sixth over.

Next assignment

LSG: May 18 vs. **KKR**
DY Patil, 7.30 p.m

RR: May 20 vs. **CSK**
Brabourne, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Yashasvi Jaiswal c & b Badoni 41 *(29b, 6x4, 1x6)*, Jos Buttler b Avesh 2 *(6b)*, Sanju Samson c Hooda b Holder 32 *(24b, 6x4)*, Devdutt Padikkal c Krunal b Bishnoi 39 *(18b, 5x4, 2x6)*, Riyan Parag c Stoinis b Bishnoi 19 *(16b, 1x6)*, James Neesham run out 14 *(12b, 2x4)*, R. Ashwin (not out) 10 *(7b, 1x4)*, Trent Boult (not out) 17 *(9b, 2x4)*; Extras (lb-1, w-2, nb-1): 4; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 178.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-11 (Buttler, 2.2 overs), 2-75 (Samson, 8.5), 3-101 (Jaiswal, 11.2), 4-122 (Padikkal, 13.4), 5-149 (Parag, 17.1), 6-152 (Neesham, 17.4).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING

Mohsin 4-0-43-0, Chameera 3-0-35-0, Avesh 3-0-20-1, Holder 2-0-12-1, Bishnoi 4-0-31-2, Stoinis 1-0-15-0, Badoni 1-0-5-1, Krunal 2-0-16-0.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

Quinton de Kock c Neesham b Boult 7 *(8b, 1x4)*, K.L. Rahul c Jaiswal b Prasidh 10 *(19b, 1x6)*, Ayush Badoni lbw b Boult 0 *(1b)*, Deepak Hooda st. Samson b Chahal 59 *(39b, 5x4, 2x6)*, Krunal Pandya c Parag b R. Ashwin 25 *(23b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Marcus Stoinis c Parag b Prasidh 27 *(17b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Jason Holder c Samson b McCoy 1 *(2b)*, Dushmantha Chameera b McCoy 0 *(2b)*, Mohsin Khan (not out) 9 *(7b, 1x4)*, Avesh Khan (not out) 1 *(2b)*; Extras (lb-3, w-12): 15; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 154.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-15 (de Kock, 2.1), 2-15 (Badoni, 2.2), 3-29 (Rahul, 5.3), 4-94 (Krunal, 13.1), 5-116 (Hooda, 15.6), 6-120 (Holder, 16.4), 7-120 (Chameera, 16.6), 8-151 (Stoinis, 19.2).

ROYALS BOWLING

Boult 4-0-18-2, Prasidh 4-0-32-2, Chahal 4-0-42-1, R. Ashwin 4-0-24-1, McCoy 4-0-35-2.

Toss: Royals; **MoM:** Boult.
Royals won by 24 runs.

Djokovic and Swiatek triumph

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ROME

Novak Djokovic won his sixth Italian Open title on Sunday after a straight-sets victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas, 6-0, 7-6(5) on Sunday. The Serb saw off Monte Carlo Masters champion Tsitsipas to claim the last Major tournament before Roland Garros gets underway later this month.

In the women's final, Iga Swiatek swept to victory beating Ons Jabeur 6-2, 6-2 to claim her fifth tournament crown on the trot. It was also the World No.1's 28th win in a row.

The results (finals):

Men: Djokovic bt Tsitsipas 6-0, 7-6(5). **Women:** Swiatek bt Jabeur 6-2, 6-2.

Anamika and Nikhat advance

BOXING WORLDS

SPORTS BUREAU

Anamika (50kg), Nikhat Zareen (52kg), Jaismine Lamboria (60kg) and Parveen (63kg) recorded impressive wins to move into the quarterfinals, while Shiksha (54kg) and Ankushita Boro (66kg) bowed out of the World women's boxing championships at Istanbul on Sunday.

Eight Indian boxers will fight in the round of eight.

Asian bronze medallist Nikhat tackled Lutsaikhan Altantsetseg well for a 5-0 victory.

Nikhat's fine footwork and left-right combinations helped her stay 4-1 up in the first round against the Mongolian.

Anamika gave a power-packed performance to trounce Australian Kristy Harris 5-0.

The results (Indians unless specified):

Pre-quarterfinals: 50kg: Anamika bt Kristy Harris (Aus) 5-0; **52kg:** Nikhat Zareen bt Lutsaikhan Altantsetseg (Mgl) 5-0; **54kg:** Shiksha lost to Oyuntsetseg Yesugen (Mgl) 3-2. **60kg:** Jaismine Lamboria bt Angela Harries (Aus) RSC-R1; **63kg:** Parveen bt Jajaira Gozalez (USA) 5-0; **66kg:** Ankushita Boro lost to Aneta Rygielska (Pol) 5-0.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Sports 18, Voot Select, Vh1, MTV & Jio TV, 6 a.m.
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka: 1st Test, day 2, FanCode, 9.30 a.m.
IPL 2022: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 7.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
Serie A: Sports 18, Voot Select, Vh1 & Jio TV, 12.15 a.m. (Tuesday)

IN BRIEF

Joshna beats Whitlock in second round

CAIRO

India's Joshna Chinappa, seeded 12th, defeated the 18th seed Emily Whitlock of Wales 11-8, 12-10, 11-5 in the women's second round of the PSA World squash on Sunday.

Other results: Men: Second round: Gregoire Marche (Fra) bt Ramit Tandon 15-13, 9-11, 11-7, 11-8.

First round: Mahesh Mangaonkar bt Mazem Gamal (Egy) 11-9, 11-2, 11-5; Saurav Ghosal bt Zahed Salem (Egy) 11-4, 11-9, 6-11, 11-7.

Man City still holds reins in title race

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Manchester City staged a thrilling fightback from two goals down to keep the destiny of the Premier League title in its hands, but Riyad Mahrez's late penalty miss forced the leader to settle for a dramatic 2-2 draw at West Ham on Sunday.

The results: Premier League: Tottenham 1 (Kane 45+8-pen) bt Burnley 0; West Ham 2 (Bowen 24, 45) drew with Man City 2 (Grealish 49, Coufal 69-og); Watford 1 (Joao Pedro 6) lost to Leicester 5 (Maddison 18, Vardy 22, 70, Barnes 46, 86); Aston Villa 1 (Watkins 69) drew with Crystal Palace 1 (Schlupp 81).

Serie A: Napoli 3 (Osimhen 32, Insigne 65-pen, Lobotka 81) bt Genoa 0.

A flamboyant all-rounder who flourished in ODIs departs

Symonds succumbs to injuries sustained in a car accident; cricket world in shock

TRIBUTE

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR
CHENNAI

It was a Sunday dawn marinated in grief for the cricketing world and the news from Down Under was grim. Former Australian all-rounder Andrew Symonds had succumbed to fatal injuries suffered in a car accident near Townsville in Queensland on Saturday night. Just 46, Symonds leaves behind a stunned Australian sporting firmament yet to come to terms with the earlier demise of Rodney Marsh and Shane Warne.

With an imposing figure and a larger-than-life outlook, Symonds was much more than numbers in statistical books. He was an impact-player through his towering shots, electric fielding and more than handy bowling be it off-spin or medium-pace. The two-time World Cup winner (2003 and 2007) had the game for limited-overs' jousts and with dreadlocks, zinc cream on his face and the odd sharp word with rivals, he always drew in the cameras.

Having played 26 Tests and 14 T20Is, the 'Symonds Effect' was felt more in his 198 ODIs that yielded 5,088 runs at a strike-rate of 92.44 and an average of 39.75. Additionally he grabbed 133 wickets and at one point he was indispensable to the Aussie squad in yellow. Later when his career declined, he found a competitor for his slot in Shane Watson.

Achiever: A proud Symonds poses with the World Cup winner's trophies of the 1999 and 2003 editions in which he was part of the Australian team. • GETTY IMAGES

Symonds factfile

Batting	M	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg	SR	100/50
Tests	26	41	1462	162*	40.61	64.80	2/10
ODIs	198	161	5088	156	39.75	92.44	6/30
T20Is	14	11	337	85*	48.14	169.34	0/2
IPL	39	36	974	117*	36.07	129.87	1/5

Bowling	M	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Avg	Econ	4W/5W
Tests	26	41	24	3/50	37.33	2.56	0/0
ODIs	198	158	133	5/18	37.25	5.00	2/1
T20Is	14	12	8	2/14	34.62	8.98	0/0
IPL	39	30	20	3/21	33.70	7.67	0/0

Amateur spirit

In an increasingly professional sporting realm, Symonds had the amateur spirit. He preferred his fishing and hiking trips which at times affected his availability to play for his country. The odd team meeting was skipped and he paid a price. Years later he sought companionship with alcohol through nights laced with self-pity and anger, a fall-out of the scars he carried from the Monkeygate controversy during the Sydney Test against India in 2008.

The unsavoury episode in which he accused Harbhajan Singh of using a racist term 'monkey' against him snowballed into a rift between the cricket boards of India and Australia. An enquiry proved inconclusive with Harbhajan insisting on his innocence and seeking refuge in a Hindi expletive that mimics the word monkey. Symonds felt let down by Cricket Australia and even if a conciliatory photo-opportunity later cropped up as he rubbed shoulders with his then Mumbai Indians' team-mate Harbhajan, the Aussie was never the same force of nature which he was in his prime. Symonds last played for Australia in 2009 before slipping into the shadows, but in his pomp, he pulled in the crowds, inspired children to copy his swag and was always an electric personality. He leaves behind memories of a splendid player and a fragile human being in equal measure and cricket has lost a unique character in these times of stylised beards, dull words and burnouts.

> **Think of your most loyal, fun, loving friend who would do anything for you. That's Roy.**
>
> ADAM GILCHRIST

Outpouring of emotions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Andrew Symonds' sudden death has triggered an outpouring of emotional tributes in the cricketing world.

Paying his condolences, Sachin Tendulkar wrote on Twitter: "Andrew Symonds' demise is shocking news for all of us to absorb. Not only was he a brilliant all-rounder, but also a live-wire on the field. I have fond memories of the time we spent together in Mumbai Indians. May his soul rest in peace, condolences to his family & friends."

Spin legend Anil Kumble paid his condolences to the family: "Tragic news to hear of Andrew Symonds passing. Condolences to his family, friends and well-wishers."

"Shocked to hear about the sudden demise of Andrew Symonds. Gone too soon. Heartfelt condolences to the family and friends. Prayers for the departed soul," wrote Harbhajan, who was part of the infamous 2008 Sydney Test.

Jason Gillespie, who played alongside Symonds, tweeted: "Horrendous news to wake up to. Utterly devastated. We are all gonna miss you mate."

Another member of Australia's 2003 World Cup squad, Michael Bevan wrote: "Heartbreaking. Aussie cricket losing another hero. Stunned. Co-team members 2003 World Cup. Amazing talent. RIP SIMMO."

Former Australia pacer Damien Fleming was also devastated by the tragic news. "This is so devastating. Roy was so much fun to be around. Our Thoughts are with Symonds family #RIPRoy," Fleming wrote.

Ton-up Mathews gives SL first day honours

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CHITTAGONG

Former captain Angelo Mathews hit an unbeaten 114 to help Sri Lanka finish strongly on the opening day of the first Test against Bangladesh on Sunday.

The tourist reached 258 for four at stumps after electing to bat first on what looked like a placid pitch at the start of the two-match series. Mathews put on a key third-wicket 92-run stand with Kusal Mendis, who made 54, to rebuild the Sri Lankan innings.

The scores: Sri Lanka 258/4 in 90 overs vs Bangladesh (Angelo Mathews 114 batting, Dinesh Chandimal (batting) 34, Kusal Mendis 54, Oshado Fernando 36, **Toss:** Sri Lanka.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Hariharan triumphs

Hariharan beat M. Murthy 3-2 (69-25, 36-61, 70-49, 44-58, 52-36) to win the CI George Handicap snooker tournament held here.

Akshay Kumar nets BTM FC's winner

Akshay Kumar's 26th minute strike proved the difference as BTM FC defeated RWF FC 1-0 in a BDFA A-division football league match held on Saturday.

Rahul stars for Md. Sporting

Rahul scored four goals as Md. Sporting FC edged Goans FC 4-3 in the BDFA B-division football league, here on Sunday.

The results: Md. Sporting FC 4 (Rahul 11, 23, 25, 65) bt Goans FC 3 (Rajip Oran 20, Pradeum Subba 58, Aryan Subba 70+2); South India FC 4 (Shapam Yaiphaba Meitei 11, 55, Shekar Bahadur Thapa 12, Ajit Dault Ram 14) bt Royals FC 0; Bangalore Mars FC 3 (V. Sunilkumar 22, S. Saravana 43, P. Mani 63) bt Sun Rise FC 0.

Gopalan Sports Centre clinches title

Gopalan Sports Centre defeated Six Cricket Academy after a Super Over finish to clinch the under-14 title at the Tiger Cup cricket tournament, here on Sunday.

The scores (final): Six Cricket Academy 160/8 in 30 overs (Dhruv Krishnan 59, Rithesh 33, Pranav 32 n.o., Rajarshhi 3/41, Suhaan 3/28) lost to Gopalan Sports Centre 160/5 in 30 overs (Kush Kumar 53, Amegh 27) via Super Over. **Super Over:** GSC 10/0 bt SCA 8/2.

Hariharan. •

Kanhav and Anjali emerge champions

Kanhav Nanavati and Anjali Semwal emerged the men's and women's champions respectively at the Century Bangalore Squash Open, which concluded here on Sunday.

The results (finals): **Men:** Kanhav Nanavati bt S. Navaneeth Prabhu 11-6, 11-6, 11-7; **Women:** Anjali Semwal bt Sunita Patel 5-11, 11-7, 11-0, 11-6.

Kimeli, Cheptai triumph in record time

Rain makes the conditions challenging; Abhishek, Parul win Indian titles

TCS WORLD 10K

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

Course records fell by the wayside as Kenyans Kipkorir Kimeli and Irene Cheptai emerged victorious in the Tata Consultancy Services World 10K Bengaluru here on Sunday.

Kimeli (27:38s) took six seconds off the elite men's course record set by Geoffrey Kamworor in 2014. In the elite women's event, Irene (30:35s) smashed the mark set by the late Agnes Tirop (31:19s) in 2018.

Tadese Worku and Hellen Obiri, who finished second in elite men's and women's categories respectively, also went under the course records.

The timings were thoroughly commendable, given the less-than-ideal conditions. Heavy rain, which stopped just an hour before the start of the elite runs, left big puddles for the runners to navigate.

The start times (7.10 a.m. for women, and 8 a.m. for men) meant that the runners felt the heat, and the humidity only made it tougher.

Leaving their mark: Kimeli and Cheptai came up with commendable performances, given the less-than-ideal conditions. • R. MURALI KUMAR

Kimeli and his challengers started slowly, taking a little over 14 minutes to complete the first 5km. Kimeli, who trained with compatriot Kamworor prior to his arrival here, turned on the heat to finish in great style.

"I promised Kamworor that I would break his course record. But when we reached the 5km, and even the 7km mark, we didn't think we would get the course record," Kimeli said.

Kimeli, who finished fourth in the 5,000m at the Tokyo Olympics, exemplified true runner's spirit in the post-race media interaction.

"Tadese Worku – I salute you. You pushed me so hard throughout the race. You are the real winner," a gracious Kimeli told Ethiopian Worku.

Unlike the men, the women kept a hectic pace throughout. The Kenyan trio of Irene, Hellen and Joyce Tele started well, before Irene and Hellen broke free.

Thrilling battle

The duo engaged in a thrilling head-to-head battle, entering the Sree Kanteerava Stadium together for the finale. With just 250m to go, Irene darted past a fading Hellen to record the win.

"Even when I entered the stadium for the final lap, I feared Hellen's kick. I kept pushing my speed to win," Irene, who won the title here in 2017, said.

Kimeli and Irene took home cheques for $26,000, and additional course record bonuses of $8,000.

Among the Indians, Abhishek Pal (30:05s) and Parul Chaudhary (34:38s) finished on top.

The results:

Elite International: Men: 1. Kipkorir Kimeli (Ken) 27:38s; 2. Tadese Worku (Eth) 27:43s; 3. Kibiwott Kandie (Ken) 27:57s.
Women: 1. Irene Cheptai (Ken) 30:35s; 2. Hellen Obiri (Ken) 30:44s; 3. Joyce Tele (Ken) 31:47s.
Elite Indian: Men: 1. Abhishek Pal 30:05s; 2. Kartik Kumar 30:06s; 3. Gulveer Singh 30:06s.
Women: 1. Parul Chaudhary 34:38s; 2. Sanjivani Jadhav 34:44s; 3. Komal Jagadale 35:28s.

Rhythm Sangwan wins sports pistol gold

India sweeps event as Manu and Naamya finish second and third

SHOOTING

SPORTS BUREAU

Rhythm Sangwan clinched the 25-metre sports pistol gold with compatriots Manu Bhaker and Naamya Kapoor also on the podium in the Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany, on Sunday.

Rhythm, who shot 588 in qualification, beat Manu 31-26 for the gold medal. Naamya came third with 16 hits. The three Indian shooters had placed top three in qualification, and came up with a strong performance in the medal round after successfully negotiating the second stage of qualification.

On the podium: Manu Bhaker, Rhythm Sangwan and Naamya Kapoor after their stellar show. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Shivam Dabas took silver in the 50-metre rifle 3-position event after losing 17-15 to Danilo Dennis Sollazzo of Italy. Qualification topper Nathan Bally (585) of France beat Pankaj Mukheja (584) by 0.1 point for the bronze.

India swept all the three medals in the 25-metre sports pistol for junior men, through Shiva Narwal, Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu and Sameer, in the non-Olympic event that decides the medals on qualification scores.

India was on top of the medals table with nine gold, 10 silver and a bronze.

The results:

25m sports pistol: Junior women: 1. Rhythm Sangwan 31 (11) 588; 2. Manu Bhaker 26 (17) 584; 3. Naamya Kapoor 16 (12) 583; 4. Michaela Boesl (Ger) 10 (9) 565; Esha Singh 574; Simranpreet Kaur Brar 571.
Junior men: 1. Shiva Narwal 583 (18x); 2. Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu 583 (17x); 3. Sameer 582; 4. Udhayveer Sidhu 579; 6. Udit Joshi 575.
50m rifle 3-position: Junior men: 1. Danilo Dennis Sollazzo (Ita) 17 (399.6) 580; 2. Shivam Dabas 15 (398.8) 582; 3. Nathan Bally (Fra) 398.4 (585); 4. Pankaj Mukheja 398.3 (584); 24. Avinash Yadav 570; 28. Dhanveer Rathod 560.